**CREATING A ‘WELLNESS RESOURCE’: UNDERSTANDING HEALTH AND WELLNESS GOALS FOR YOUTH WITH INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

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**Objectives**: Youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) are more likely to experience diminished wellness across multiple dimensions and decreased quality of health compared to their peers without disabilities. Yet, little is known about how wellness is understood, promoted and addressed for this population. Most research to date has focused exclusively on one wellness dimension (e.g. physical wellness), with limited success in promoting overall wellness. Our research team has been working with Special Olympics (SO) to explore the health and wellness needs of their athletes, who all have IDD. Our current study aims to understand: 1) what contributes to a sense of wellness for athletes, 2) what wellness goals are relevant and important in their everyday lives; and, 3) what resources and supports are needed by SO coaches to promote and support athletes’ wellness. Our results will inform the co-creation of a ‘Wellness Resource’ for athletes, parents/caregivers and coaches.

**Methods:** This qualitative project (in progress) involves interviews with participants from three stakeholder groups – SO athletes aged 14-25 years old, parents/caregivers and coaches. Our target is 12 to15 participants per stakeholder group. To date, 5 athletes, 5 parents, and 6 coaches have participated in interviews that explore their perspectives on wellness goals, and the activities and settings associated with a sense of wellness. Athletes participate in a second ‘go-along’ interview, which involves going on an athlete-guided tour of an activity and setting within which the athlete associates with being and feeling “good” or “well”. Data analysis involves a thematic, descriptive analysis of the interview transcripts and the interviewer’s observational memos. Similarities and differences between stakeholder groups will be examined. An analytic summary report will be generated for feedback and interpretation at a stakeholder meeting, which will inform the key elements of the Wellness Resource.

**Results:** Our preliminary results indicate that promoting wellness through physical activity is what attracts athletes and families to SO programs initially. However, participation in these programs impact on many other areas of wellness (e.g., social connection, autonomy, sense of belonging/of being accepted for who they are and what they can do). Athletes’ goals include having fun, being with friends and achieving sport-related goals. Parents’ goals are around broader wellness issues (e.g., inclusion and belonging, mental wellness, and building confidence). Coaches tend to promote health by focusing on ways to improve athletic performance (e.g., eat healthy, drink water) but would like guidance on wellness promotion.

**Discussion/Conclusion:** Participation in SO programs offers opportunities to promote health and wellness in multiple dimensions. Athletes, parents/caregivers and coaches have common, but also some different wellness goals, which can be taken into account in developing health and wellness promotion programs and tools. Coaches do not have specific training in health and wellness promotion or about common health issues for people with IDD. Enhancing coach training and creating a Wellness Resource tailored to the wellness goals and learning styles of the key stakeholders can contribute to improving health and wellness outcomes for youth with IDD.

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