**DEVELOPING AN ADAPTED PHYSICAL EXERCISE (APEX) MANUAL FOR ADULTS**

**WITH INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

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**Objectives:** Engaging in physical activity is a promising strategy to mitigate negative health consequences related to poor physical fitness as a result of increased sedentary behaviours among adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Therefore, increasing the number of adults with IDD who sustain an active lifestyle is imperative. To achieve this, an Adapted Physical Exercise (APEX) manual will be developed to provide adults with IDD evidence-based information on physical fitness, including exercise prescription, proper technique, and safety in the form of photos and instructional videos. Given the universal design of the manual, it will also function as a resource for family members and support staff who seek to facilitate physical fitness in the daily lives of the people they support.

**Methods:** Evidence to develop the APEX manual was gathered across 18 months of APEX programming. First, support staff who attended the APEX program were surveyed to determine the format and general content of the manual. Second, evaluation of three, 12-week APEX programs led to the compilation of all exercises completed by participants (N = 64), and the number of participants who completed each exercise during the APEX programs. Following the creation of a rank ordered list, the top 15 exercises that participants engaged in during these APEX programs were chosen to be included in the APEX manual.

**Results:** Planned content for the APEX manual was informed by support staff survey responses, which will result in the manual consisting of approximately 15 exercises, a generalized warm up, weight lifting technique, a stretching and cool-down routine, as well as information on gym etiquette and safety. To aid in exercise selection, examples and templates for devising exercise routines will be provided. In addition, support staff emphasized the importance of self-care routines pre- and post- exercise, and thus the manual will include information and videos on preparing yourself to attend a fitness facility, and caring for yourself (i.e., nutrition and hygiene) after exercising. Information in the manual will be presented using words, photos, and videos to provide an accessible resource that draws on principles of universal design. This will ensure the APEX manual will benefit all people as an educational resource by providing visual and auditory prompts, as well as modelling. To assist users of the APEX manual in identifying with this resource, past participants of the APEX program (i.e., adults with IDD) will be showcased within the photos and videos.

**Discussion:** Creating an APEX manual that employs a universal design will offer a resource accessible to adults with IDD, as well as family members, support staff, and developmental service sector agencies who seek to incorporate physical activity into the daily lives of the people they support. The impact of the project will be extended and sustained through knowledge transfer activities, such as ensuring the availability of the manual throughout Ontario, and offering workshops for its successful implementation. Through this endeavour, we can improve the quality of life of adults with IDD through accessible knowledge and inclusive physical activity.

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