

DEVELOPING BEST PRACTICES FOR ADAPTIVE MOVEMENT PROGRAMS FOR OLDER ADULTS LIVING WITH DEMENTIA.

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Purpose: Using a critical disability studies orientation to shape and understand older adults' lived experiences and capacities, the purpose of this study is to document and analyze appropriate and meaningful program development for adults with dementia, with the input of consultants and dementia community insiders.

Overview: Older adults with dementia have been studied to find the positive connections between physical activity and wellness as a way to decrease the rate of dementia's progression. Literature showcases recommendations for aging populations participating in physical activity and specifically movement programs (any sport and fitness activities that fall into general exercise) to improve their physical health. Themes that are being derived from the literature focus on the issues of ageism, discrimination and stereotyping of older adults. In a community-based setting where leisure professionals are responsible for program development, there is a lack of curriculum development and research being done involving movement sciences and critical disability studies. Leisure-based programming, specific to dementia, is under-developed in the Niagara region. A critical disability studies orientation compels the researcher to work consultatively with community members in order to develop relevant, meaningful programming.

Proposed Methods: The research proposed will use an overarching, culturally sensitized program evaluation framework, with a focus on the process analysis component of program evaluation. The preliminary phase of the research will involve collecting substantial information about the current needs for programming in the Niagara region, along with the needs of the dementia and older adults community. The secondary phase will involve a pilot of the program (for approximately five participants) that has been developed from the findings, followed by a consultative process with participants through interviews, focus groups, and expressive methods of feedback from the participants and their caregivers (referred to as the "experts"), helping researchers reshape the program. The final phase will take all collected feedback about the pilot program, and launch a larger program of 20 or more participants to provide a final round of feedback. All of the phases within the formation of the program development will create the end result of understanding the needs of the dementia and older adults community, to help garner the best practices for future practitioners.

Research Implications: The best outcomes of this process analysis will be to guide meaningful, consultative practice in program development in dementia and other programming development involving older adults. The implications of this research is relevant for other disciplines to help assist in the development of inclusive movement programs, thus strengthening the field while using perspectives and tools from disability studies. Further, extensive previous research from various disciplines have suggested understanding that conventional dementia programs need refinements to remain applicable and impactful when it comes to decreasing people's susceptibility to dementia. By using ideas and findings from other disciplines, practitioners can improve the current program evaluation processes and understand through what is successful or not within their own practices.

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