

Benefits of sport for physically disabled



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Introduction

This report investigates the significant benefits of recreation for people with physical disabilities. Two beneficial activities will be suggested. It will examine the contemporary issues associated with the group regarding participation in sport. Moreover outline the barriers to participation for people with physical disabilities and how these may be overcome.

There are many barriers that can affect participation in sport. These can be intrinsic factors such as fear and anxiety. This could be based on low acceptance and expectations of performance. The individual may be influenced by the idea of being judged. Extrinsic factors can also be an issue; these can include the cost of attendance for the activities or venues. Public Transport may not be adequate or cost effective. Unqualified or inexperienced instructors can limit the experience for the individual therefore limit the desire for the individual to attend recreation activities. (Donald 2014)

The National Disability Authority of Ireland (NDA) carried out a study on the importance of recreation, fitness and sport among people with disabilities. The purpose was to discuss their personal experiences whether good or bad and if they experienced any barriers for participation. This was an ideal way of getting first hand information which gave way for suggestions and preferences regarding participation. The findings from the study were startling due to the barriers and over all experience of recreation for the participants.

(Murphy & Carbone 2008).

There was a variety of participants within different age groups, circumstance, disabilities and experiences in physical activities. Although the participants had good and bad experiences they stressed the importance of participation in recreation, sports and leisure and recommended proposals to overcome barriers.

(Murphy & Carbone 2008).

Barriers to participation in Ireland

In response to the survey, the Barriers that people experienced to participation in Ireland were the lack of information about the importance of fitness. There is insufficient transport for people especially in rural areas. Inadequate facilities within the community i. e. play grounds. Unpleasant experiences in schools and low expectations from teachers and peers were deemed critical. There is a lack of experienced facilitators, coaching and sponsorship within the community. Furthermore there is a lack of physical sports for people with disabilities in the media and poor PE provisions in schools were also substantial factors.

(Murphy & Carbone 2008).

To overcome barriers to participation

The factors that emerged through the survey for the fundamental participation and momentous quality experience of people with disabilities were outlined as follows:

Improving facilities within the community such as playground elements so all persons can thoroughly enjoy. Ensure equality is addressed by increasing regulations through clear targets provision of services and information about the importance of exercise. Train teachers/educators and coaches with inclusive activities for all capabilities and put more resources into service development. To improve PE experiences in schools by adaptation and more enjoyable physical activities from an early age . (nda 2014 Chapter 3).

Kosma (2005) suggested that only 12% of people with physical disabilities partake regularly in physical activities. These barriers are significantly adding to the draw back on involvement with sports within the community for this cohort.

(Kosma, 2005)

In contrast to Kosmas research, Ward (2003) conducted a study on people with physical disabilities in the East of Ireland in relation to their viewpoint on activities within day centres. The purpose of the study was to identify the effectiveness of activities within the centres. It comes at no surprise to establish that the primary reason for attending day centres are for social and recreation. Out of 105 participants, 67. 3% suggested that they attend day centres for social and recreational purposes. 19% suggested education purposes, 6. 4% suggested respite care, 5. 8% suggested they attend the centres to increase or maintain their mobility and 1. 3% suggested that they attend to increase independence.

(Ward, 2003)

Importance of recreation for people with physical disabilities

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There are significant benefits for the participation in sport, recreation and leisure. These are based on health, fitness, participation within the community, independence and good sense of self while fundamentally enhancing quality of life, (Shank, Coyle, Boyd & Kinney 1996). Schallock (1990) as cited in Eath & Walls (2010) defined quality of life as “ *the outcome of individuals meeting basic needs and fulfilling basic responsibilities in community settings (family recreational, school and work). Individuals who are able to meet needs and fulfil responsibilities in ways satisfactory to themselves and to significant others in community settings experience a high quality of life in those settings*”. (D'Eath & Walls 2010 paper 6).

Murphy & Carbone (2008) outlined that children with disabilities are more inclined to be at risk of obesity than the general population. This risk is associated with the lack of exercise due to internal or external challenges. These challenges may be, not believe in ones own ability or others not believing in ones own ability which hinders motivation. The outcome of lack of participation in recreation can lead to a greater risk of health conditions over their life span. The connection of enduring health complications and immobility are feelings of decreased self-esteem and social acceptance and in turn can develop social exclusion and dependence. To support this occurrence, Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, recognises “ the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.” (NDA, 2005)

The Irish National Children's Strategy (2001) states that children will have access to play, sport, recreation and cultural activities to enrich their experience of childhood and that children with a disability will be entitled to the service they need to achieve their full potential. (NDA, 2005)

Disabilities can range from mild, moderate, severe to profound, whatever the variability it is crucial for the individual or group to be given the opportunity to participate in recreation, Sports and leisure as it can give them a sense of belongingness. Sense of belonging can create the feeling of being part of a team, sense of achievement and social inclusion. Belonging is in the middle of Maslow's (1968) hierarchy of needs and is deemed more important than self-esteem and self-actualisation. (Baumeister & Leary 1995),

Exercise is key to good health and overall wellbeing. Rimmer et al, (2010) p. 250 defined " exercise " as " planned, structured, repetitive, and purposive in the sense that the improvement or maintenance of one or more components of physical fitness is the objective."

Art and drama stimulates thinking and through this operation learning and creativity can perform. Participating in Gardening can give a sense of independence and production. Dr Thinguri R, et al (2008) argued that Participation in activities is the context in which people form friendships, develop skills and competencies, express creativity, achieve mental and physical health, and determine meaning and purpose in life."

(Dr Thinguri, et al 2008)

Contemporary issues

The findings from the Second Annual Report (2008) focused on the relationship between incomes and playing sport. It suggested that the recession had a great impact on participation of sport in Ireland. Active Participation in sports fell to 30.8% in 2008, from 32.9% in 2007 due to the lack of resources and funding. In light of this, Funding has been redirected to the focus of the Special Olympics as the economic crash has greatly affected fundraising. Special Olympics Ireland has been dependant on funding from the government and the public. Due to the stretch of the budgets, between 2008 and 2013 there was a huge cut of 59% in Government funding within the Republic of Ireland thus reaching out more to the public than ever before. Considering the economic status however can be challenge for the public to commit to such benevolent. (ESRI 2009)

The range of activities and the adaptations made to facilitate individuals with physical disabilities.

Basket ball is widely associated with the Special Olympics. This sport in particular has many benefits for the participant such that it provides opportunities for social interaction and gives way for self-expression. Furthermore it teaches self-discipline and skills that are beneficial for various activities. More importantly it increases level of fitness and health. (Special Olympics 2014)

Basketball can be adapted for many people with physical disabilities, for example a person who is a wheel chair user can use the two hand chest pass when shooting, can travel with ball in lap for two pushes of the wheelchair.

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The person can only dribble twice and then must pass to team player, shoot or take two more pushes of wheelchair. Put all players in wheelchairs so all players are equal in game and make sure all players remain seated though the duration of the game. (Walter, 2008).

Basketball can help individuals improve their muscle strength and stamina. It minimises the risk of coronary heart disease. Helps control joint swelling and pain associated with arthritis. It can help reduce blood pressure in some people with hypertension. Furthermore it can minimise the risk of diabetes and colon cancer. (CDC, 2014)

Although basketball is beneficial is not cost effective. Transport and a venue can be very costly. Some People with disabilities have free travel but public transport may not be equipped with relevant facilities to meet the needs of individuals. To overcome this issue, there are initiatives in place to help with funding such as the Irish Sports Council (ISC). This initiative can help eliminate costs of private transport and with the use of disability cards, individuals can apply for inexpensive memberships in leisure centres.

The Irish wheel chair association (I. W. A) is a non profit organisation who also recognises the important of recreation for people with physical disabilities. They aim to achieve participation in areas such as basket ball and swimming.

Swimming is a significant source of fun in collaboration with exercise and can be adapted to the needs of individuals with disabilities. Such that those who have mobility issues and are wheel chair users can attend a facility with slopes if desired. This can help the individual to easily access the water

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without hoist assistance “ if not necessary” thus empowering independence. Additionally Swimming is a magnificent cardiovascular activity with great benefits to health. By moving limbs inward and outward and by using a kicking motion can improve the functions of the muscles, lungs and circulation of the blood. (Healthy Alberta, 2014)

Conclusion

In conclusion to this report, the benefits of recreation, sport and leisure has emerged as being significantly important. Health, social and personal benefits are defined as equally important. Although there are many barriers that can affect the participation of people with physical disabilities, it is addressed as mandatory. Based on the literature, the suggestion is that individuals with disabilities want to participate in recreation. However, the level of participation is low for the reasons of barriers outlined. One would suggest that with such high numbers of participants desiring recreation, the standard of services is left un-measured.