

"Active Start in Sunnyvale": The Challenges and Triumphs of Community Partnerships in Grant Development, Exercise Program Implementation, and Research

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Introduction

- Wellness By Design Symposium and RFP
- Decision to partner with City of Sunnyvale



Purposes of the Project

- To increase physical activity participation among sedentary members of the Sunnyvale Senior Center by using an intervention based on the transtheoretical model
- Increase number of trained instructors
- Implement the Active Start program

Purposes of the Project

- Increase social connections between seniors, community exercise leaders, and university students by creating a welcoming, encouraging, and motivating exercise environment

Transtheoretical model

- Anyone know this one?
 - › Precontemplation
 - › Contemplation
 - › Preparation
 - › Action
 - › Maintenance

Project Goals

- Improve functional fitness
- Improved physical self-perceptions and self-efficacy
- Advance stage of change for exercise

Participants

- New members of the senior center
- 50 years and older
- Center primarily serves Caucasian, Asian (predominantly Chinese and Filipino), East Indian and Hispanic communities
- Recruitment will occur during new member orientations

Methods

- Initial assessments
 - › Informed consent
 - › Exercise Stage of Change (Nigg & Riebe, 2002)
- Exercise intervention
 - › rPAR-Q (Shepard, Thomas, & Weller, 1991)
 - › Exercise Self-Efficacy (McAuley, 1993)
 - › Physical Self-Perception Profile-Adult (Chase, 1991)
 - › Senior Fitness Test (Rikli & Jones, 2001)

Methods

- Dissemination of informational material tailored based on stage of change
- Follow-up assessments at 3 and 6 months for exercisers
 - › Exercise Self-Efficacy
 - › PSPP-A
 - › SFT
- Reassess ESA for all at 6 months

Hypotheses

- Participants will progress in their exercise stage of change after receiving tailored information regarding exercise
- Individuals who participate in the exercise class will demonstrate significant improvements in physical self-perception, exercise self-efficacy, and functional fitness

Challenges and Benefits

- The goal of the funder and the agency was not to further theoretical knowledge and model testing, but rather to enact changes in the community
- The focus for the funder was to increase evidence-based exercise programming in the community
- The focus of the agency was to increase physical activity among the sedentary members of the center

Challenges and Benefits

- The program will likely increase physical activity among the senior center members
- However, it is largely a replication study

Challenges

- Bureaucracy of working with community organizations
- Recruiting and training students when we do not currently have a structure within the university that trains students to teach physical activity to older adults

Benefits & Triumphs

- More effective at securing private foundation funding when working in partnership with communities
 - › Benefits of sharing the work of grant writing
 - › The community organizations have structures and staff in place to help with the work and implementation of the grant
 - › Able to show in-kind support
 - › Sustainability of the program

Benefits & Triumphs

- Training students to teach evidence-based exercise programs in the senior center
- Forming partnerships with the community
- Increasing physical activity among older adults by developing a sustainable, culturally relevant, evidence-based exercise program

Closing thoughts

- Partnerships with community organizations have a multitude of benefits:
 - › More viable to funding agencies
 - › Can result in a long-term positive impact on the community
 - › Can lead to further research and funding collaborations
 - › Provide networking and job opportunities for students

Closing thoughts

- Partnerships with community organizations can come with a few challenges:
 - › Organizational structures and constraints
 - › Can limit the type of research done
- The benefits are numerous and likely worth the effort!

Thanks!

