

Problem Statement: Fitness & Wellness Organizations



Special Olympics
Health
MADE
POSSIBLE BY **Golisano**

ISSUE STATEMENT

People with intellectual disabilities have high prevalence of physical inactivity and high rates of preventable health conditions, including obesity and cardiovascular disease.ⁱ Increased participation in fitness and wellness activities can improve their overall health and well-being.ⁱⁱ However, many fitness and wellness organizations do not know how to effectively serve this population nor how to support their inclusion into their programs.^{iii, iv}

THE VISION

All people with intellectual disabilities have access to and meaningful participation in fitness and wellness programs and activities.

HOW WE WILL ACHIEVE THE SOLUTION

To help reduce the high prevalence of obesity, cardiovascular disease, and physical inactivity among people with intellectual disabilities it is essential for fitness and wellness professionals to supporting their inclusion.

1. Teach staff about intellectual disabilities and ensure everyone understands how to modify activities for people of all abilities.
2. Update programs to be more user friendly for people with intellectual disabilities by using a variety of communication methods such as verbal instructions, modeling, written and visual/pictorial instructions.
3. Use concise, easy-to-understand (non-technical) language in all verbal and written communications. This includes membership/registration paperwork and marketing materials. Consider providing individualized support for people with intellectual disabilities where appropriate.
4. Ask the experts – people with intellectual disabilities - to provide feedback on any programmatic and organizational changes.

ⁱ Anderson, L. L., Humphries, K., McDermott, S., Marks, B., Sisirak, J., & Larson, S. (2013). The state of the science of health and wellness for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. *Intellectual and developmental disabilities, 51*(5), 385-398.

ⁱⁱ Blick, R. N., Saad, A. E., Goreczny, A. J., Roman, K., & Sorensen, C. H. (2015). Effects of declared levels of physical activity on quality of life of individuals with intellectual disabilities. *Research in developmental disabilities, 37*, 223-229.

ⁱⁱⁱ Bossink, L. W., Van Der Putten, A. A., & Vlaskamp, C. (2017). Understanding low levels of physical activity in people with intellectual disabilities: A systematic review to identify barriers and facilitators. *Research in Developmental Disabilities, 68*, 95-110.

^{iv} Mcqarty, A. M., & Melville, C. A. (2018). Parental perceptions of facilitators and barriers to physical activity for children with intellectual disabilities: A mixed methods systematic review. *Research in Developmental Disabilities, 73*, 40-57.