ISSUE STATEMENT

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

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.

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