

# Pathfinder Service Exercise Program to Improve Health and Wellness at the YMCA

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## Project Description & Sites

- Area of focus involved Leadership and Program and Policy Development
- Created a health and wellness program at the Parkview Huntington Family YMCA for the purpose of promoting physical activity management and maintenance for the Pathfinder Service population
- Observed 3 Pathfinder Service programs to gain knowledge about the population and their fitness needs were to integrate into project
- Project development consisted of creating the Exercise Program Binder that contained: a) exercise guide with modified exercises, b) safety awareness, c) long-term participation strategies, and d) mindfulness activities
- The Exercise Program Binder will assist the YMCA staff in promoting physical activity among the Pathfinder Service population, engagement in fitness activities, and create an inclusive gym atmosphere

## Mission & Vision Statements

- To integrate individuals with disabilities into the Huntington YMCA community by providing a method for Huntington YMCA Wellness staff with material to facilitate safe, modified exercises
- By promoting exercise and physical activity, individuals with disabilities will have the resources to engage in an active lifestyle that promotes empowerment, confidence, and holistic health



## Project Completion

- Created the Exercise Program Binder and provided training to the YMCA staff, which will be available for future use in the Wellness Department to create an inclusive atmosphere and promote long-term participation in health and wellness activities
- Obtained a health and wellness-related certification, as well as interviewed coaches and personal trainers to gain knowledge about YMCA daily operations, modified exercises, safety precautions, and fitness instructor training
- Observed and participated at 3 Pathfinder Services programs to gain in-depth knowledge about individuals with disabilities and integrated that information into the YMCA staff training and Exercise Program Binder



## Literature Review

- Results indicated that individuals with intellectual disabilities participate in less physical activity than individuals without intellectual disabilities (Sundahl et al., 2016)
- Individuals with disabilities expressed feelings of isolation, being ignored, and stared at during their exercise routine at the gym; however, when the participants exercised together, they formed social bonds that protected them from feelings of oppression (Richardson et al., 2017)
- Physical activity offers an array of health benefits both physically and mentally (WHO, 2018)
- OTs are qualified to serve in wellness and prevention, as well as network with organizations to expand skilled services and knowledge to promote health (Hildenbrand & Lamb, 2013)
- Individuals with intellectual disabilities who participate in physical activity may experience an increase in physical capabilities, happiness, and social participation (Cartwright et al., 2016).

## Future Implications to OT

- Improves performance in ADLs
- Health and wellness
- Quality of life
- Independence
- Job task training
- Social participation
- Community inclusion

### Key References

\*Full reference list and image reference available upon request

## Deliverables

- Provided an Exercise Program Binder containing modified exercise techniques, safety precautions, and goal-setting strategies for the Parkview Huntington Family YMCA
- Provided a presentation to YMCA staff about navigating the Exercise Program Binder and basic knowledge about Pathfinder Service population
- Developed an adapted gym equipment list to increase gym inclusion at the Parkview Huntington Family YMCA
- Created an exercise activity guide to integrate into the Pathfinder Services program daily schedule
- Obtained a health and wellness certification to increase comprehension of fitness instruction and fitness safety