Communities Moving Together: A Novel Physical Activity Promotion Program for Low-income Families

Elise Krause, OTS; Anna Lucas, OTS; Mikayla Redding, OTS; Alyssa Synek, OTS; Morgan Wilson, OTS & Jennifer White, CScD, MOT, OTR/L

Background
- Low-income families face unique barriers to reaching recommended levels of physical activity (Chang & Kim, 2017).
  - Limited time, energy & resources
  - Lack of safe, open spaces
  - Physical activity opportunities often require fees or transportation
- Behavioral Activation strategies can increase and sustain frequency of positive PA behaviors (Perencevich, Davidson & Tompkins, 2001).
- Creating a specific goal and activity plan increases the chance that the participant will complete the desired goal (Ludvik & Latham, 1991).

Objectives
- To implement and test the efficacy of the Communities Moving Together physical activity promotion program, tailored to the unique needs of the family and based on the principles of behavioral activation.
- Educate participants on how to incorporate enjoyable physical activity into their daily lives using goal-setting and activity scheduling methods.
- Create an intervention protocol for stakeholders to implement and sustain Communities Moving Together in a multitude of communities in the Greater Pittsburgh Area.

Eligibility Criteria:
- Parent(s) or guardian(s) to a child under the age of 18.
- Child(ren) must reside in the same home as the parent or guardian at least half of the time.

Recruitment:
In partnership with the Greater Hazelwood Family Center and Center of Life, used word-of-mouth communication and distributed flyers in Hazelwood neighborhood.

Program Outcomes:
- 6 out of 7 participants met one or more goals.
- People per household was 3.14.
- Little to no change in sleep.
- 6 of the 7 participants (85.7%) were female.
-6 of the 7 participants (85.7%) met one or more goals.
- Limited time, energy & resources
- Lack of safe, open spaces
- Physical activity opportunities often require fees or transportation
- Behavioral Activation strategies can increase and sustain frequency of positive PA behaviors (Perencevich, Davidson & Tompkins, 2001).
- Creating a specific goal and activity plan increases the chance that the participant will complete the desired goal (Ludvik & Latham, 1991).

Program Methods
- Program Design:
  - 6 Weeks
  - Three one-on-one meetings
  - One check-in
  - Health educational activity sheets
  - Goal-setting & Activity scheduling skills
  - Resource Guide

Data Collection:
- Collected via self-report surveys administered at the first and final meeting. Qualitative data was collected during interviews.

SMART Goal Setting
- Specific
  - What: Play unstructured games
  - When: After school
  - Where: Backyard
- Measurable
  - How often: Twice per week
  - How long: At least 30 minutes
- Attainable
  - Does this goal consider available resources, time, and energy?
- Relevant
  - Does this goal increase my physical activity?
- Time frame
  - By what date will you meet this goal?
  - 6 to 8 weeks

MAKE THE FINAL GOAL:
In 6 weeks, my children and I will play unstructured games in the backyard, after school, 2 times per week, for at least 30 minutes.

SCHEDULE THE GOAL BEHAVIOR:
The participant will then schedule the goal behavior in an area of the activity matrix that is both convenient and desired by the participant and family members.

Flexible Delivery
Family-Driven

Core Principles
- Acknowledge Contextual & Environmental Factors
- Goal-Setting & Activity Scheduling
- Individualized

Acknowledgments
Thank you to Live Well Allegheny for providing guidance and support throughout this Doctoral Capstone Experience. Additionally, we would like to thank the staff and participants from the Greater Hazelwood Family Center and Center of Life for their continued enthusiasm and participation in this physical activity promotion program.

References

Conclusions
Communities Moving Together successfully increased physical activity behaviors in 6 of 7 families through helping them incorporate enjoyable movement into their daily routines.
- Activity scheduling and goal setting are feasible and effective to increase the incidence of health behavior change.
- Occupational therapy’s value in health promotion lies in client-centered approaches and context-dependent treatment.

Future Directions
- Formal hand-off of all materials and resources to the Live Well Allegheny staff at the Allegheny County Health Department.
- Communities Moving Together has the flexibility to reach all families in the Greater Pittsburgh Area.
- Communities Moving Together can be generalized to help families implement any type of behavior change. It does not necessarily need to be physical activity-focused.
- To maximize results, evidence concludes that a 9-week time frame should be used to sustain behavior change (Lally et al., 2010).

Limitations
- Small sample size limits generalizability.
- Limited amount of funding for incentives.

Due to COVID-19: 
- Inability to provide tangible incentives to participants.
- Unexpectedly required to deliver intervention virtually.

Results
- Seven participant families took part in the program with 100% retention.
- Demographics: Of the 7 participants (85.7%) were female and the average number of people per household was 3.14.
- 6 out of 7 (85.7%) participants met one or more goals.
- Positive trend noted in mood and stress from pre-to post-survey
- Lack of change in sleep
- All participants either agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements:
  - My family values physical activity
  - Activity scheduling & goal setting helped me to achieve my goals
  - I feel comfortable completing goal setting & activity scheduling on my own
  - I will achieve goal setting & activity scheduling in the future to reach my goals

A comprehensive, family-centered program
to increase participation in physical activity with a foundation in activity scheduling, goal setting, and occupational therapy principles.

This program gave me the confidence to be physically active without needing the outside time or money that I don’t always have the access to.” — Participant

Therapy's value in health promotion lies in client-centered programs and family members.