

EXPLORING BARRIERS & SOLUTIONS TO RECREATION PARTICIPATION

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SESSION OBJECTIVES:

- Understand the benefits of recreation & leisure engagement for individuals diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)
- Understand the barriers to leisure engagement for individuals with ASD
- Explore strategies for overcoming barriers

**IF BREAD IS THE FIRST
NECESSITY OF LIFE,
RECREATION IS A CLOSE SECOND.
- EDWARD BELLAMY**



BENEFITS OF RECREATION PARTICIPATION

- Decrease stress / Increased quality of life
- Increased social relationships and acceptance
- Reduction in inappropriate and self-stimulatory behaviors
- Increased physical/emotional wellbeing

INCREASED QUALITY OF LIFE

- **The most influential factors on Family Quality of Life were whether the child with ASD had a major health concern, whether family's needs were met by disability related services, and whether there were *opportunities to engage in leisure and recreation activities*.**
 - **How satisfied are you with your family's leisure and recreation?**
 - **9.9% Very satisfied, 41.1% satisfied, Neutral 28.5%**
 - **To what degree is your child with ASD involved in your family leisure and recreation activities?**
 - **49% always, 37.7% Quite a bit, 31.8% some, 10.6 a little**
 - **How important are recreation & leisure to your family quality of life?**
 - **49% rated this very important, 37% quite important, 10% somewhat important**
- **Jones, S., Bremner, E. & Lloyd, M. (2017). Autism spectrum disorder: Family quality of life while waiting for intervention services. *Quality of Life Research*, 26, 331-342.**

INCREASED QUALITY OF LIFE

- **Garcia-Villamisar, D.A., & Datillo, J. (2010). Effects of a leisure programme on quality of life and stress of individuals with ASD. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 54(7), 611-619.**
- **Bishop-Fitzpatrick, L., Smith Dawalt, L., Greenburg, J.S., & Malick, M. R. (2017). Participation in recreational activities buffers the impact of perceived stress on quality of life in adults with autism spectrum disorder. *Autism Research*, 10(5), 973-982**

DECREASE IN STEREOTYPED AND REPETITIVE BEHAVIORS

Sorensen, C., & Zarrett, N. (2014). Benefits of physical activity for adolescents with autism spectrum disorders: A comprehensive review. *Developmental Disorders, 1*(4), 344-353

- Based on 9 studies
- Increase in physical activity = Decrease in stereotyped and repetitive behaviors (9 studies)
- Better outcomes associate with more vigorous activity (jogging vs walking)
- Improved social & emotional functioning (2 studies)

SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS & ACCEPTANCE

- **“Leisure and recreation activities serve as the primary means by which people come into contact with one another and form relationships” (Godbey, 1999; Howard & Young, 2002)**
- **“Offers significant opportunities to practice and develop social skills through activities” (Baker, 2000; Garcia-Villamizar & Datillo, 2011)**
- **“Provides a way to meet others and form friendships around mutual interests and shared activities” (Datillo, Benedek-Wood, & Mcleod, 2010)**
- **“Improves community members’ level of awareness and appreciation of capabilities of participants with ASD” (Devine, 2004)**

Coyne, P & Fullerton, A. (2014). *Supporting Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders in Recreation* (2nd edition)

UNFORTUNATELY...

- **Children, adolescents, and adults with ASD participate in fewer social and community recreational activities than individuals without ASD** (Buttimer & Tierney, 2005; Orsmond, Krauss, & Seltzer, 2004; Solish, Perry, & Minnes, 2009)

BARRIERS: EXTRINSIC

- **Lack of information (unaware of various options)**
- **Transportation difficulties**
- **Scheduling conflicts**
- **No one to do things with**
- **Poor quality services**

Levine et al. 2004

BARRIERS: INTRINSIC

- **Limited Social Skills**
- **Social Demands**
- **Low Independence**
- **Adherence to Routine**
- **Limited Leisure Skills/
Restricted Interests**
- **Responses to Sensory
Experiences**

SOCIAL DEMANDS OF THE ACTIVITY

1

Understand the
demands for social
interaction

2

Select activities that
have clear rules
governing interaction

3

Find a version of the
activity that has less
social demands

RESTRICTED,
REPETITIVE BEHAVIOR
PATTERNS, INTERESTS
OR ACTIVITIES



Find activities that have repetitive actions to motivate engagement during unstructured times



Structured classes or activities with specific routines



Incorporating the interests of the individual into the activity

RESPONSES TO SENSORY EXPERIENCES

- Understand any sensory sensitivities
- Provide activities that contain preferred sensory stimulation
- Cause and effect activities (provide immediate engagement)

CHARACTERISTICS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH ASD MAY BE STRENGTHS FOR LEISURE PARTICIPATION

Restricted interests

Using visual information meaningfully

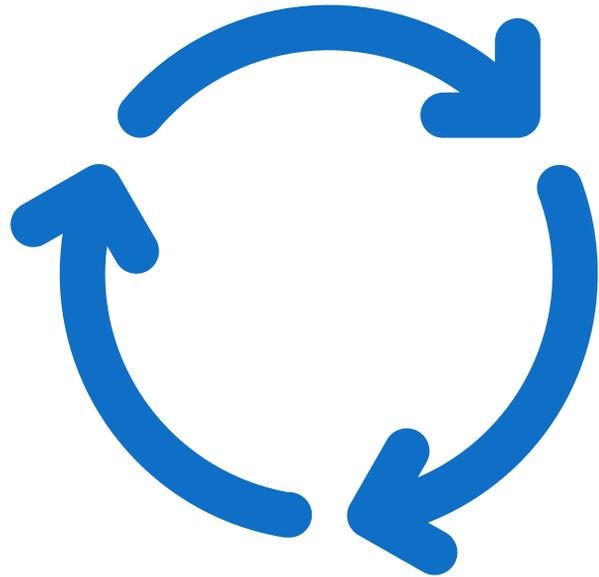
Strong visual-spatial ability

Long attention span for activities of interest

Concrete & literal

Memorization skills

Attention to details



INTRODUCING NEW ACTIVITIES

Does it contain features important to the individual?

TRANSLATING PREFERENCES TO ACTIVITIES

Features

- **Concrete, clear rules**
- **Strong visual spatial ability**

Activity

- **Checkers, chess**
- **Puzzles, Lego's**

TRANSLATING PREFERENCES TO ACTIVITIES

Features

- Highly organized, structured
- Regularly scheduled
- Active/limited waiting

Activity

- **Zumba class/Line Dancing**
- **Yoga class**
- **Swim Team practice**
- **Hiking, Cross country skiing**

GOLF

Preferences

- Outdoors
- Limited Social Interaction
- Walking
- Repetition
- Clear Beginning and Ending

HOW DO WE FACILITATE SUCCESSFUL RECREATION PARTICIPATION?

- Interest
- Find the right program
- Ask the right questions
- Identify and provide the right supports

DISCOVERING LEISURE INTERESTS

- **Questionnaire**
- **Pictures**
- **Direct observation**
 - **Attract to certain materials**
 - **Types of interactions with materials**
 - **Choice of activities**
 - **Social preference**

CONSIDERING FEATURES OF AN ACTIVITY

- **Clear rules**
- **Clear beginning and ending**
- **Physical activity required**
- **Social interaction required**
- **Repetitiveness**
- **Sensory feedback**
- **Amount of waiting required**

ACTIVITIES THAT ARE SUSTAINABLE

- **Enjoyed by same-aged peers/age appropriate**
- **Readily available in the community**
- **Can be done in a variety of environments**
- **Economically feasible**
- **Are of interest to friends and families**
- **Potential as a lifelong leisure pursuit**
- **Can be engaged in alone or with others**

IS THIS ACTIVITY, RIGHT?

- **Is the activity of interest? YES**
- **Is this an inclusive or segregated setting?**
- **Is staff trained and knowledgeable about ASD?**
- **Is there an atmosphere of support and acceptance?**
- **Cooperative or competitive activities?**
- **Is the environment appropriate and/or can it be modified?**

WHAT ARE YOUR NEEDS AS A PARENT?

- **Can some of your needs be met through your child's activities?**
- **Are there activities that can allow all members of the family to participate but at their own level?**
 - **Example: Ski Lodge (Different levels of difficulty, tubing, indoor activities)**

DOING HOMEWORK!

Questions to ask prior to visiting or signing up!

- **Prior experience working with participants with ASD**
- **Philosophy of the program**
- **Number of participants**
- **Staff ratio**
- **Strategies that are used/have been used**
- **Accommodations/staff training**
- **Behavior problems**
- **Others??**

STRATEGIES FOR INTRODUCING NEW ACTIVITIES

Through Visual Supports:

Outline of what will occur (Given in advance)

- **What am I expected to do?**
- **What will happen?**
- **What the activity entails from start to finish?**
- **How will I know when I am finished?**
- **What will I do next?**

- Tincani, M. & Bondy, A. (2015). *Autism Spectrum Disorders in Adolescents and Adults: Evidenced-Based and Promising Interventions*
- Coyne, P & Fullerton, A. (2014). *Supporting Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders in Recreation* (2nd edition)

EXPLORING THE ENVIRONMENT

- **Being aware of factor's that may lower a participant's ability to function**
 - Structure/consistency
 - Procedure
 - Environmental stimuli
- **Determine accommodations/or modifications needed**
 - Quiet space
 - Access to fidget
 - Preparing for change/transitions
 - Visual information
 - Timeline for completing the activity

UNDERSTANDING SUPPORTS NEEDED

- **Visual**
- **Environmental**
- **Routines**
- **Expectations**
- **Sensory Supports**
- **Preferences**
- **Communication/Social Skills**
- **Behavioral Challenges**

SUPPORTING AND GUIDING PARTICIPATION IN RECREATION

Provide Feedback

Highlight Natural Cues

Provide Visual Sequencing & Support

Provide Literal & Clear Directions

Reduce Stressors

Respect Personal Space

Coyne, P., Klagge, M.L., Nyberg, C. (2016).

QUALITIES THAT MAKE
LEISURE MATERIALS
AND ACTIVITIES MORE
SUCCESSFUL

Challenging without being over-stimulating

Suitable for the person's ability level

Limited demands for complex social interaction

Opportunity for a sense of control or mastery

Provide opportunities for ongoing practice

RELATED SKILLS FOR INDEPENDENCE

- Transportation
- Making purchases
- Preparing for the activity (What to bring/wear)
- Keeping track of time
- Awareness of free time
- Initiation
- Problem solving



IN CONCLUSION

- Create a balanced leisure lifestyle
- Foster and use natural supports
- Make needs known!

QUESTIONS??

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