



All Aboard: User experiences of Adaptive Paddling Programs

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Introduction

- Leisure activities in natural environments are associated with improvements in mental and physical well being. ¹
- Physical, societal, and psychological barriers limit people living with disabilities from engaging in outdoor activities, specifically ⁱⁿ water-based contexts. ²
- Research literature ^{documenting?} outlining the experiences of people engaged in adaptive paddling is limited. ²

Different Strokes

Turning the Tide

Objective

To explore paddlers' experiences in two adaptive kayaking and paddleboarding programs: one ^{recreational; the other focused on} therapeutic goals and outcomes; ^{the other was} ~~recreational.~~

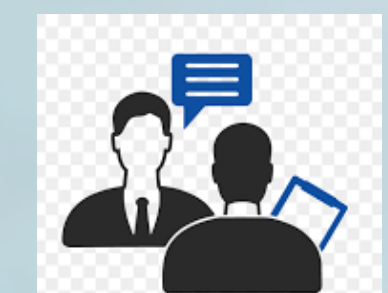
Considering your audience, I feel putting the recreational program second, with so little description, may appear biased. We don't actually have anything to say in our objective about the recreational program's focus, so putting it first seems less value-laden to me.

Methods

Headwinds



Observations (N=24)



Interviews (N=11)



Age (Mean: 26, SD: 10.6)



Varied physical, cognitive and developmental impairments

Trustworthiness ^{strategies employed}

Findings

References

- Casey, N., O'Broin, D., & Collins, B. (2009). Research article: The meaning of the experience of kayaking for persons with spinal cord injury. *Irish Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 37(2), 29-36.
- Dorsch, T. E., Richards, K. A. R., Swain, J., & Maxey, M. (2016). The effect of an outdoor recreation program on individuals with disabilities and their family members: A case study. *Therapeutic Recreation Journal*, 50(2), 155-171.

Future & Practice

Results

- Participants discussed the personal meaning they attributed to being on the water ~~and the different aspects of adaptive paddling.~~ *"I find it erases a lot of the problems I have in my mind, the things that are bothering me, they all sort of dissipate and I find that I'm restored with a complete sense of [...] inner calm, which is exactly what I needed." -JACKIE- (age?other fact?)* ^{We no longer have access to our data. Our stats are stored on the blue hand driven Ben's office. Sorry!}
- Additionally, participants discussed the differences between adaptive paddling as an activity related to work (exercise) and/or play ^{Adult, got aid user (occasionally used a cane)} (relaxation, an outlet for social connections and fun).

- Participants experienced a variety of transitions and ambiguities related to the process of becoming a paddler. First there was a sense of self-doubt and uncertainty about their competency as paddlers. As they engaged in the activity, it became achievable. Participants felt that the use of staff and/or adaptive equipment enabled their paddling endeavors. ~~As participants engaged in paddling, they wanted more involvement through volunteering as peer mentors or buddies to other clients starting in the activity of adaptive paddling.~~ ^{Some participants then expressed a desire for}

"It's kind of a sport that [...] even if you can't paddle at all, you can still go on the board and ^{sombody} ~~somebody~~ can ^{paddle} ~~paddle~~ for you so you can still experience it [...]. [Staff] were ~~able~~ able to adapt the board in a way that they could safely take [my friend] out as well, so there isn't a lot of limitations" - MARION - 30, manual wheelchair user, age 30

- Participants identified two main types of barriers: physical and social. Physical barriers included the built and natural environment (such as facility inaccessibility and sandy beaches), while social barriers included discrimination, stigma, and a combination of positive and negative perceptions of others when using adaptive equipment in kayaks and/or paddleboards. Participants also discussed the limitations related to inadequate funding and program aversion to risk.

"The looks on people's faces, you can tell that you're kind of changing their perspective of people with disabilities in general. [...] There are constantly people stopped [...] and they're like taking pictures of us, and they're just amazed that somebody in a wheelchair is out there doing that, and that's my favorite thing about it is watching people's minds, perspectives change. [...] I like people to see that hey, someone with a disability actually can do things. We're out there and we are doing things - we're not just sitting at home like everybody thinks we're doing!" - SAM-35, manual wheelchair user

Discussion and Conclusion

- The study findings indicated the following:
- Paddlers appreciate having different choices and options in adaptive paddling programs. Currently there is a variety of equipment and options that can suit personal preferences for exercise, fun and visibility of disability.
- Participants have a desire for more opportunities to explore ^{with peers,} at other locations and for longer periods of time. They want more ^{choice,} adaptability in use of supports and equipment, ~~to suit their individual needs at their own leisure.~~ Currently, these are limited/determined by current risk management culture related to activities in the outdoors for those living with disabilities.
- Funding, policies and access shape paddler's experiences.

This study's findings can aid program coordinators, therapists, and local organizations to shape program development and advocacy in the risk management industry so individuals with disabilities can enjoy more access and choice in their local communities when engaging in adaptive paddling experiences.

- Future ^{research} is recommended to ^{inform} risk management and ^{policies} policy making. Paddling program evaluations can ^{also} aid ~~current~~ organizations ⁱⁿ determining program effectiveness and ~~training resources~~ ^{for those offering adaptive programming} to clients with disabilities.

Layout

I like the flow. Overall the formatting is visually appealing to me. I find the font can be difficult to read at times, but I like the playfulness of it enough that I vote to keep it.

Great Work Alex!