



EXPLORING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PHYSICAL LITERACY PROGRAM FOR YOUTH ACCESSING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES: A NEEDS ASSESSMENT



Hannah A. Trites (BSc Honours Candidate)¹

Son Truong¹, Teresa Pinto², Beth Cummings², Jennifer Swansburg², Andrea Waters², Michelle Stone¹, Alex Fulford¹, and Daniel Stevens¹

¹DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY, ²IWK HEALTH CENTRE

BACKGROUND

- Youth with mental health disorders (MHDs) are at an increased risk of developing chronic health conditions such as obesity and type 2 diabetes.¹²
- Studies have found this population group may have lower levels of physical activity (PA) and physical literacy (PL) than peers, which may be attributed to reduced confidence in their physical abilities, low motivation to be physically active, and compromised fundamental movement skills.³⁴
- Therefore, additional supports, particularly in the community, are required to help address these needs.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to focus on youth and caregiver perspectives to inform the development of a community program – Move2Improve.

- 1 To explore the needs of youth with mental health disorders for the development of physical literacy and activity
- 2 To explore the barriers of youth with mental health disorder for the development of physical literacy and activity
- 3 To explore facilitators to inform the development of a physical literacy and recreation program for youth accessing mental health services

METHODOLOGY

Study Design Qualitative description (QD) (Neergaard et al., 2009)

Sample Youth ages 10-17 accessing mental health services, specifically for anxiety and depression, at the IWK Health Centre or within the community and parents of these youth

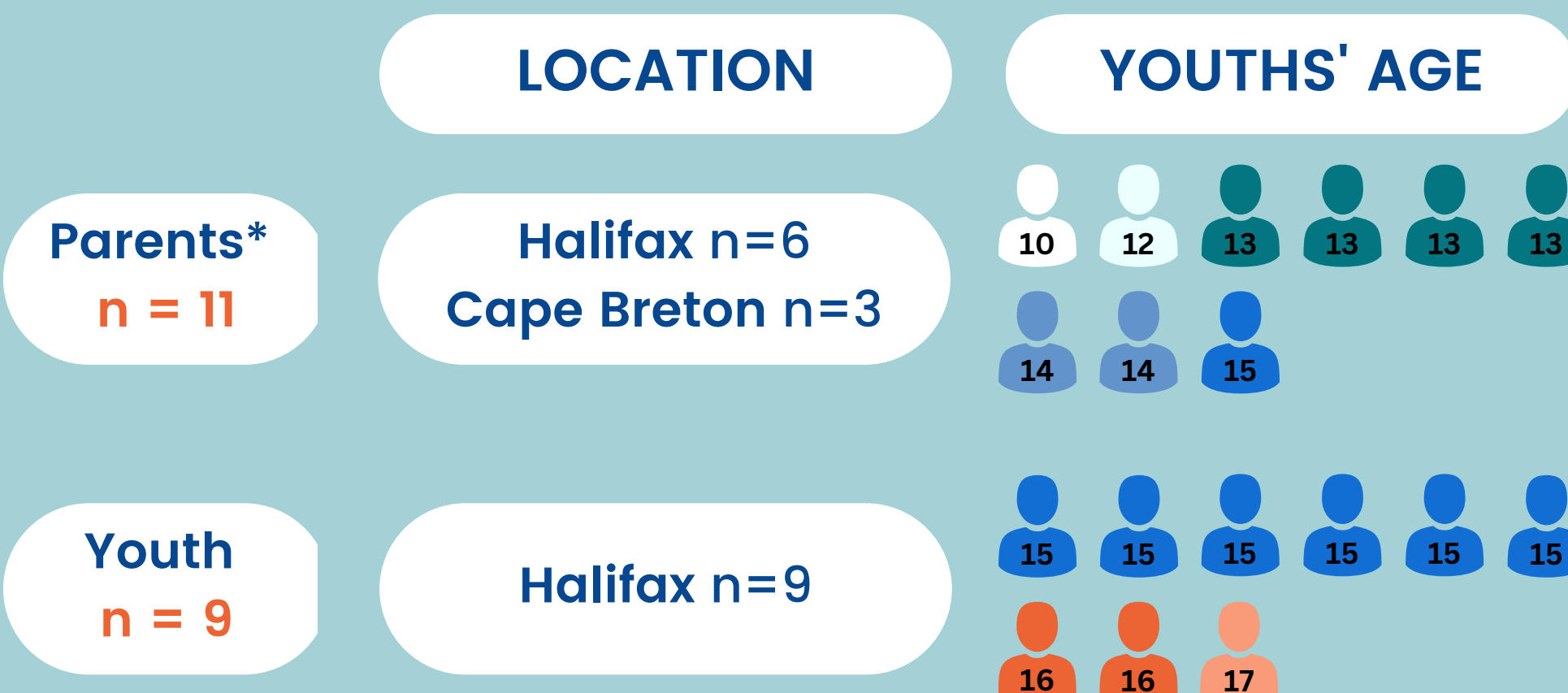
Recruitment Via referral, social media & community resources

Data Collection Semi-structured focus groups & demographic questionnaire

Data Analysis Braun & Clarke's (2006) Reflexive Thematic Analysis

FINDINGS

Participant Demographics



*two participants opted not to respond to the demographic questions

Themes from Parent and Youth Focus Groups

AREA OF FOCUS	THEMES
Past Experiences	1 Benefits of PA & PL 2 Sense of Belonging
Participation Barriers	1 Location & Transportation 2 Financial Cost
Program Design	1 Inclusive Activities 2 Social Connection

Past Experiences

1 Benefits of PA & PL

Parents discussed that PA positively impacts their youth's mental health, in addition to their physical health.

"...one thing I've come to realize with my children [is that] when they are isolated, they tend to have low self-esteem and [become] more depressed. Socializing with others, getting involved in sporting activities, is a very good thing." (P19)

2 Sense of Belonging

Participants stated that they value the overall experience of PA and recreation program rather than the specific activities.

"...my child was bullied by her friends when she started the program, due to her [mental] health issue. They made her feel like she shouldn't be apart of them." (P01)

Participation Barriers

1 Location & Transportation

Participants expressed that the location of PA programs is frequently a barrier.

"...when I got an affordable one (PA program), the location was too far...which lead us to another transportation cost." (P01)
"...transportation, that's the biggest barrier for myself and my son." (P20)

2 Financial Cost

Participants discussed that PA and PL programs often times have associated costs, making them inaccessible.

"...I am a single mother, I work 2 jobs, so we don't really have money for these [programs]...the finances, the cost, is the biggest barrier for me." (P18)

Program Design

1 Inclusive Activities

Parents named inclusion as one of their biggest needs when it comes to PA and recreation programs for their youth.

"Peer group [PA] activities is what I want for my kid...activities that they can all do together" (P04)

2 Social Connection

Youth participants expressed that they highly value the element of socialization in PA programs.

"My favourite part [is] getting to meet new people and also [learning] new skills for social activities..." (P10)
"I love having fun, meeting [new] friends, [learning] new skills to aid my personal development...or my [PA] education." (P14)

DISCUSSION

- Overall, participants recognize the value of PA and its positive impact on youth with MHDs.
- Parents and youth reported that there is a need for a PA and PL program that addresses the current barriers for this population, including location, cost, transportation and inclusivity.

IMPLICATIONS

Develop and pilot a program (Move2Improve) with a toolkit for physical literacy for adolescents accessing mental health services

- 1 Improve PA and PL program participation
- 2 Improve youth and adolescents' mental health through PL programs
- 3 Program development with emphasis on social connection and inclusivity

References

- (1) Mannan, M., Mamun, A., Doi, S. & Clavarino, A. (2016) Prospective associations between depression and obesity for adolescent males and females - A systematic review and meta-analysis of longitudinal studies. *PLoS One*, 11(6), e0157240. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0157240
- (2) Sharma, A., Madaan, V. & Petty, F. D. (2006). Exercise for mental health. Primary care companion to the Journal of clinical psychiatry, 8(2), 106. <https://doi.org/10.4088/pcc.v08n0208a>
- (3) Edwards, L. C., Bryant, A. S., Keegan, R. J., Morgan, K., & Jones, A. M. (2017). Definitions, Foundations and Associations of Physical Literacy: A Systematic Review. *Sports medicine*, 47(1), 113–126. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40278-016-0560-7>
- (4) Fortnum, K., Furzer, B., Reid, S., Jackson, B., Elliott, C. (2018). The physical literacy of children with behavioral and emotional mental health disorders: A scoping review. *Mental Health Physical Activity*, 95–131. doi:10.1016/j.mhpa.2018.10.001