



Abstract Title: Integrating steps to connect to support self-management across sectors

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Introduction/Background

Steps to Connect (S2C) is a leisure education program (Dattilo, 2015) developed by our research team (authors, 2017a), in collaboration with community partners, to support people living with chronic conditions to explore and engage in meaningful recreational opportunities in the community that can support chronic condition self-management and enhance health and well-being. While much focus in the health sector has been placed on chronic condition self-management and support, collaboration between recreation and health sectors in the community is limited (authors, 2017b). Both health professionals and people living with chronic conditions have limited knowledge on *what* recreation is as well as *how* and *why* recreation can be a resource for managing chronic conditions (Jerant, Friederichs-Fitzwater & Moore, 2005). S2C is designed to address this gap by training facilitators to deliver the program in community settings to people living with chronic conditions. Participants are supported to learn about local opportunities, explore interests and values, set goals, and create action plans to get involved in some form of community-based physical or social recreation. Preliminary feasibility testing has occurred in the Western Zone of the Nova Scotia Health Authority (NSHA) and is currently underway in collaboration with community partners through funding from NSHA Chronic Disease Innovation Fund and New Horizons for Seniors grants.

Purpose

The purpose of this workshop is to share information about S2C with the aim of exploring ways to increase use of leisure education as a tool to support chronic condition self-management in community settings.

Approach

The workshop will provide the background of the S2C program, including results related to participant outcomes and data from facilitators and stakeholders (authors, 2017c). Participants will have opportunities to experience some of the S2C activities and consider how such activities might be adapted to fit local contexts. Participatory methods will be used to encourage participants to discuss the logistics of implementation within their unique contexts, including what supports or further education might be required.

Outcomes

By presenting information gathered to date from stakeholders, facilitating engagement in S2C activities, and utilizing participatory methods for discussions, the importance of recreation as a strategy to promote health and wellness will be highlighted. Opportunities for further training in S2C will be discussed.

Conclusion

S2C is a means through which those in the health and recreation sectors in Nova Scotia can provide community-based self-management support to people living with, or at risk of developing, chronic conditions.

References

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