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Gaelic mothers & others: An evaluation of a sports program helping to remove barriers to female adult recreational participation in sports

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Abstract

Staying physically active has been shown to help improve a person physical and mental health and overall wellbeing. An active lifestyle can help reduce problems associated with aging and a modern-day lifestyle. Sadly, research has shown that the modern-day lifestyle has led to an increase in obesity across many cultures due to sedentary behaviors. Likewise, social behaviors and sedentary lifestyles have increased stress, anxiety, and depression among many adults. Regrettably for many adults the struggle to have a healthy physical lifestyle is increasing due to many potential barriers. It is important for adults to maintain a healthy lifestyle as physical and mental health problems increase as we get older but yet it can be difficult to do so with work, family, and the potential financial costs associated with a physically active lifestyle. Therefore, many national governments and sports organizations are attempting to create more opportunities for adults to improve their wellbeing lifestyle through sports programs and general physical activity programs. One such organization is the Ladies Gaelic Football Association (LGFA) which is based in Ireland and focuses on promoting Gaelic Football to women. The LGFA provide football for females from underage to adulthood but it becomes more elite as you get older and therefore many adult women stop playing. To help keep those women involved the LGFA have created a program called Galeic4mothers&others and this paper will review this programs content and goals potential to increase a healthy lifestyle for adults and thus can be used as an example for other organizations.

Keywords: LGFA, gaelic football, barriers, health, wellbeing

Introduction

Society has changed in numerous ways that could be viewed as both positive and negative. Society has changed immensely with instant communication of media and information as well instantaneous gratification and while many of these changes has had many positive improvements there are also many side effects such as increased workloads, stress, anxiety, and a more sedentary lifestyle. The increased automation and efficiency of modern society has decreased the need for physical activity at the workplace, likewise, the abundance in technology outside of work has created a lifestyle focused on instant gratification and inactive based hobbies such as video gaming, fantasy sports, increased television consumption, and online social media activities. (Dondzila, Swartz, Keenan, Harley, Azen, & Strath, 2014; Eakins, 2018; Livingstone, Robson, McCarthy, Kiely, Harrington, Browne, Galvin, Wareham, and Rennie, 2001; Patel, Schofield, Kolt, & Keogh, 2013; Vaterlaus, Patten, Roche, & Young, 2015) [8, 9, 22, 31, 36]. This has led to a population that has become more obese, isolated, and with increasing medical issues as highlighted by Murtagh, Murphy, Murphy, Woods, Nevill, and Lane (2015) [29] who stated that this inactivity is a leading cause of death around the world with over one third of adults not getting the required and consistent levels of physical activity in any form. Importantly, the authors found that gender played a leading role in activity participation given its role in society with females facing greater barriers than males, and that as adults aged, inactivity increased due to multiple external and internal lifestyle factors.

In another study by Murtagh (2014) [28] the authors found that there were low levels of physical activity by adults and participation decreased with age. Despite warnings from national and international organizations on the need to engage in weekly physical activity, adults in many countries continue to not participate in activities.

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What is consistent from the research is the need to encourage and develop programs and opportunities for people to engage in physical activity. Eime, Harvey, Charity, Casey, Westerbeek, and Payne (2016) ^[10] also highlighted that those who are involved in forms physical activity are in much better physical health, increasing more socially adapt, and have a positive mental health.

It is common knowledge that exercise through sport or physical activity has benefits for an individual's physical and mental health (Ball, Bice, & Maljak, 2017; Hickey & Mason, 2017; & Moss, Moss, & McInnes, 2018) ^[5, 18, 26]. Physical activity comes in all forms and at people exercise at different levels as they age especially in relation to gender (Hickey & Mason, 2017) ^[18]. Relatedly, physical activity does not have to vigorous to be successful but does need to be consistent to ensure benefits are sustained. Physical activity is critical at a young age to prepare people to maintain a healthy lifestyle but unfortunately as people age motivation to exercise can decrease to an increase in potential barriers to participation (Ahmed, Ho, Al-Haramlah, & Mataruna-Dos-Santos, L.J. 2020) ^[1]. Therefore, is extremely important that people have access and opportunity to participate in some form of physical activity.

Certainly, research has highlighted that a lack of physical activity has a detrimental effect on both physical and mental health. Despite this research, people continue to not engage in the required amount of physical activity to lead a healthy lifestyle. The sedentary lifestyle and lack of motivation has increased a multitude of health problems, from obesity, diabetes, increased blood pressure, and poor eating habits (Grzelak, 2024) ^[15]. Likewise, without physical activity there has been an increase in mental health issues. In today's technological isolationist society, people work more and socialize less than previously. This change has led to individuals more focused on work and instant gratification which in turn has led to more mental health struggles such as an increasing level of stress and anxiety in society. Indeed, the fact that there are so many non-profit mental wellness organizations and for-profit lifestyle coaching businesses shows that there is a gap between reality and ideal lifestyles. While, many societies have embraced talking about modern day mental health struggles more openly than before, the push for promoting physical health, once seen as a useless hobby, is now slowly gaining traction at the governmental level and at the for-profit business model. Despite this growth and promotion, physical activity still has a label of not being important or has mixed messages on its necessity especially in schools (McKenzie & Lounsbury, 2009) ^[24]. Parker, MacPhail, O'Sullivan, Ni Chroinin, and McVoy (2017) ^[30] highlighted that it is of paramount importance that physical activity should be encouraged and become an integral part of learning because of its long-term health and wellness benefits. There are many reasons and benefits to engaging or increasing physical activity such as social and medical. On the social aspects for participating in physical activity Maturo and Cunningham (2013) ^[23] showed that friendship and enjoyment was an essential motivation for participation especially at a younger age. Similarly, Allender, Gill, and Charlie (2006) ^[2] found that social interaction and enjoyment were important for increased participation in physical activity. Ball *et al.*, (2017) ^[5], highlighted the Centre for Disease Control has continually promoted that physical activity was necessary to improve a person's physical health and lower the risk of potential health issues. Unfortunately, the CDC also stated that over 60% of all Americans do not engage in the required

amount of needed physical activity and this was supported by the World Health Organization who stated that globally 1 in 4 people failed to be physically active (WHO, 2018). Tinker, Molloy, Monks, Pennells, Russell, and Haines, (2017) ^[34], Gronmark (2018) ^[17] and Pharr, Lough, and Terencio (2020) ^[32] affirmed through their research that adherence to a physically active lifestyle is of utmost importance to maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Indeed, engaging in physical activity has been shown to help improve mental health (reducing stress and anxiety) and physical health (lower obesity, lower blood pressure, bone density improvement) which is especially important in older adults (Moss *et al.*, 2018) ^[26]. Gristwood (2011) ^[16] stressed one important benefit of physical activity and that was the ability to socialize and have a social support network. This is important as a motivation to become physically active as encouragement and support can increase participation. Tinker *et al.* (2017) ^[34] reiterated that physical activity benefits are extremely important for older women in regards to promoting increased health and lifestyle. Unfortunately, despite these benefits being widely known in academia and in daily life, there continues to be barriers to increasing individual's activity levels.

There are many barriers to people participating in physical activity. Ball *et al.* (2017) ^[5] stated that time, cost, and lack of social support were strong barriers, likewise, Moss, Moss, and McInnes (2018) ^[26] and Cassou, Fermino, Rodriguez Añez, Santos, Domingues, and Reis (2011) ^[6] stated that time, cost, accessibility, safety and lack of support were important barriers. Additionally, Livingstone *et al.*, (2001) ^[22] discussed how social class is another barrier that is connected to time and cost. Gronmark (2018) ^[17] highlighted that a dislike for support and the need for family support are indicators for not engaging in physical activity. Additionally, Pharr *et al.* (2020) ^[32] / Hickey stressed that time was extremely influential in gender given the stratified roles in society. The numbers of barriers that prevent people engaging in physical activity emphasize the disconnect between the need to participate and the opportunity to participate. If people are extremely busy with work or life and are struggling to survive financially then of course physical activity may not seem important at that time. Likewise, if people are continually busy and are isolated from friends and family then they will not have the social support or motivation to become/stay active especially during tough times. The common set of barriers related to females of cost, safety and marriage (Pharr *et al.*, 2020) ^[32], are important as they are intertwined into limiting opportunities for females to participate in physical activity. Given the gendered roles within society, women predominantly are homemakers while also working outside the home, this limits potential time for activity due to family, work, and other commitments. To improve the opportunity for everyone and decrease the potential of barriers to engage in physical activity, there must be a evaluation of what does not work and what is needed to improve opportunities at the local, national, and international level.

While gender is not the most significant barrier, it is a common barrier than many experiences given the dual roles in modern society of many women. Livingstone *et al.*, (2001) ^[22] highlighted that males are more likely to engage in physical activity than females due to females working inside and outside of the family home. This concept is also related to the barriers of cost and time in that if females are doubling on work and family duties then they have little time to exercise and are likely may not have the energy either. Likewise, if

they are in charge of the family's children this may limit them participating in sport due to a lack of child care options, which is also connected to social class barriers.

Eime *et al.* (2016); Hovemann, and Wicker (2009); and Van Tuyckom, Van de Velde, and Bracke (2012) showed that in Europe females were more likely to exercise less than males and the differences were explain in part due to the reality of everyday lives and more barriers than males. The limitation for females participating in physical activity are connected with age and social class and Van Tuyckom *et al.* (2012) was adamant that when equality was promoted society wise then the potential barriers diminished. Therefore, by reducing inequalities and therefore removing barriers and increasing opportunities females do in fact engage in physical activity as much as males. Eime *et al.* (2016) showed that in early teens/adulthood females do participate in physical activity in good numbers because of opportunities in schools and clubs. Thus highlighting that when opportunities exist/barriers are diminished that females are just as likely to participate in physical activity as males.

The gender barrier is connected to multiple barriers but reducing the limitation of participation by offering increased opportunities through organizational or governmental programs can improve the overall motivation for participating in physical activity. Given the barriers and lack of opportunities for many adult women to participate in sports and physical activity, the LGFAs G4M&Os offers the beginner and returning to exercise individual the opportunity to begin and sustain a healthy lifestyle. This paper will examine the issues regarding opportunities for adult females and how the LGFA program is an excellent example of a program that can open new opportunities for females to overcome participation barriers.

Literature Review

Research has shown that physical activity has numerous social, mental and physical benefits for kids and adults. From lowering obesity, stress, anxiety, improving confidence, and self-esteem it is well known that physical activity and sport is effective in creating a healthy lifestyle (Anshel, 2014; Ball *et al.*, 2017; & Hulteen, Smith, Morgan, Barnett, Hallal, Colvas, Lubans, 2017) ^[5, 20]. From external benefits such as encouraging positive socialization and increasing social networks to the internal benefits of good health and lower risks of diseases a healthy lifestyle is extremely important for individuals. (Ball, Timpero, Salmon, Giles-Corti, Roberts, & Crawford, 2007 & Ball *et al.*, 2017; Molanorouzi, Khoo, & Morris, 2015) ^[4, 5, 25]. As such it is important that individuals have the opportunity to partake in physical activity in whatever form available.

Sadly, the modern lifestyle has become increasingly sedentary due to many barriers and more despondently the idea that physical activity is not important or not needed. While the modern lifestyle may be viewed as not conducive to playing "sports or working out," because of the high pace lifestyle, the need to be healthy has not disappeared (Sas-Nowosielski, Nowicka, and Kowalczyk, 2017) ^[33]. According to Farrell, Hollingsworth, Propper, and Shields, (2013) ^[11] it is important for individuals to participate in physical activity weekly for over 2-3 hours yet despite many governments highlighting this fact many people fail to achieve this level of activity. This is important as governments struggle with rising health costs and an increasingly aged population therefore it is important that physical activity is promoted and supported as a preventative measure. Moreover, DeMano Doehring (2014)

^[7]; Molanorouzi *et al.*, (2015) ^[25]; and Pharr *et al.* (2020) ^[32] indicated while physical activity as a preventative measure against poor health is well known, unfortunately, as people age physical activity continues to decrease in importance especially for women, people who are married and low-income individuals. Thus, when increasing opportunities for individuals to engage in physical activity it is important to value all demographics.

Regrettably, as people age, their physical activity declines and they spend less time taking the opportunity to participate in sports (Ball *et al.*, 2017; / Molanorouzi *et al.*, 2015) ^[5, 25]. From adults working long hours, to parents not viewing physical education (PE) as not important a plethora of barriers have increased the lack of physical activity. With rising obesity, a more sedentary lifestyle, and a workaholic culture it is not surprising that health concerns are a major issue for many organizations (Gronmark, 2018; Molanorouzi *et al.*, 2015; & Pharr *et al.*, 2020) ^[17, 25, 32]. The following paragraphs will examine the barriers that are placed on female participation in sports, an organization that is trying to overcome these barriers with a unique and inclusive sports program.

Women's Barriers to sport

Even at the professional level, despite positive progress across multiple sports, there are still issues with equality and equity. Indeed, from salaries to media representation, female sports continue to come a distant second to male sports Grabmüllerová, 2022; Mullins, 2015) ^[13, 27] Of course, not everyone can be a professional but if there are constant issues within the professional sporting ranks then this shows that there are much deeper issues with female sports participation. Historically, Mullins (2015) ^[27] and Tinker *et al.* (2017) ^[34] highlighted that from an early age female participated less in physical education or used different forms of exercise than their male counterparts for many different reasons but one of the most common is that sports are for boys. Consequently, if children do not participate in sports or physically activity at a younger age then it is unlikely that they will play sports in adulthood.

Figures show that the majority of adults do not participate in the required amount of physical activity in order to have a healthy lifestyle and as such health issues are a constant concern (Ball *et al.*, 2017; Gjestvang, Abrahamsen, Stensrud, & Hakkstad, 2020; & Hulteen *et al.*, 2017) ^[5, 14, 20]. Indeed, Molanorouzi *et al.*, (2015) ^[25] reaffirmed that adult's engagement of physical activity continually declines as they get older because of intrinsic and extrinsic reasons. This is due to a multitude of potential internal and external barriers such as time, socio-economics, safety, accessibility, overall enjoyment, and social support (Ball *et al.*, 2017; Gjestvang *et al.*, 2020; & Moss *et al.*, 2018) ^[5, 26]. Gronmark 2018 ^[17] highlighted that additionally motivation was an important component of participating in physical activity especially for adults. Therefore, if individuals are not motivated to be physically active because of potential difficulties then it is likely they will choose a less challenging hobby. This was reaffirmed by Sas-Nowosielski *et al.*, (2017) ^[33] who stated that barriers such as time, support, accessibility, and support are certainly related to being motivated to stay physically active, with time being one of the most significant barriers. If adults don't have time or have easy access to facilities or are fearful of exercising this could potentially encourage not being active. Similarly, Franco, Tong, Howard, Sherrington, Ferreira, Pinto, and Ferreira (2015) ^[12] and Cassou *et al.*,

(2011) ^[6] highlighted that barriers such as safety, cost, social influences, and competing activities are significant in limiting physical activity engagement. Likewise, and extremely relevant is the idea that if people are self-conscious about their skills, have bad memories of sports, or a lack of social support then again this would likely limit adherence to staying active. (Gronmark, 2018) ^[17].

While the modern lifestyle is busy, and time is viewed as one of the main causes of an inactive lifestyle it is important for organizations to consider how to overcome these potential barriers especially for women of all ages (Tinker *et al*, 2017) ^[34]. Indeed, Pharr *et al*. (2020) ^[32] affirmed that there are important implications for organizations to ensure that opportunities are available for people to engage in physical activity and sport to ensure a healthy and balanced lifestyle.

Ladies Gaelic Football Association

The Ladies Gaelic Football Association (otherwise known as the LGFA) is one of the leading female sports organizations based in Ireland, with additional outlets throughout the world. Historically, Gaelic football was viewed as men's sport, with its governing body, the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) being founded in 1884. Throughout the latter part of the 20th Century, games for females were played at local events but these were usually exhibition games and they would draw an excellent attendance and during the 1960's and early 1970's there was unofficial games being continually played in several counties Ireland and the players and administrators were making a push for more organized games similar to the GAA. Therefore, in 1974 the LGFA was officially founded and the games became established and the foundations were laid for further expansion (lgfa.com)

From its official beginnings the LGFA has now grown a limited beginning to an organization that has activities in every corner of Ireland from Underage to adulthood giving increased opportunities for females of all ages to participate in organized sport, physical activity, and leading a healthy lifestyle. Indeed, the LGFA is one of the foremost organizations in Ireland for promoting an overall holistic healthy lifestyle at multiple age levels. Specifically, the LGFA offer sporting activities to females in schools, universities, and at the community level. This allows them to create opportunities from as early as 6 years of age up to adulthood. One of the major concerns with the LGFA is the dropout rate or burn out rate of young females as once they drop out it is rare for them to return to the sport and many times in physical activity in general.

Despite the concern about people leaving the sport, the LGFA is continuing to grow numerically and with new fun-based programs at all levels, the dropout rate may fall. Additionally, the LGFA is becoming increasingly popular outside of Ireland. For over the last decade and longer the LGFA has been an integral component of many communities internationally from the Americas, Europe, Australia, and Asia. In many of these areas, the communities follow the models from Ireland and have seen a lot of positive growth and interest. This is especially true of the LGFA within Asia where a good portion of the people playing the sport have never played the sport before, gave up playing the sport at a young age, or had no interest in physical activity. The sport in Asia is very much community based on a model that encourages participation no matter your skills, fitness, or age. It is important that a participation-based model is encouraged as it is one avenue that can help to overcome the potential barriers to playing sport and engaging in physical activity and the LGFA are

developing many programs in conjunction with other sports bodies to encourage fun physical activities.

G4M and O Program

One program that was created by the LGFA to give opportunities for females to participate in a fun physical environment was Gaelic4Mothers&Others (G4MO). The G4MO initiative is a non-competitive sports program that encourages females who are beginners or not presently playing the sport in a positive social environment. The program was started in 2008 with the aims of attracting females who had never played Gaelic football before or who had given up the sport and has been successful in attracting interest in participating in sport and physical activity. As noted previously, the LGFA is one of the largest female sporting organizations in Ireland with objectives of creating and promoting female Gaelic football. Likewise, G4MO has a subset of objectives that are utilized to encourage participation that involve creating an environment that was inclusive, welcoming, open, and recreational based. These objectives allow the G4MO program to be open and accessible to everyone no matter their demographics, fitness level, or skill level.

The program itself is a weekly activity for an hour plus games to help introduce basic skills and an understating of the game itself. As it is non-competitive the weekly sessions are fun based rather than results based and this helps overcome several of the potential barriers such as a lack of confidence and fear of lacking skills. This is an important aspect of the program as its target market is females who may be hesitant to engage in sport or physical activity due to age, skills, or negative past experiences. Additionally, the social aspect of the sessions gives rise to an increase of social networking and meeting new friends which in turn can encourage continual participation. The games played by the teams and players are based on small sided games so everyone gets the opportunity to play which overcomes another barrier. There are multiple events so if one is missed individuals still have an opportunity to play and exercise at other events. Moreover, the sessions last for 6 weeks and as such give plenty of time for participation. Furthermore, the G4MO is based in local communities and at local facilities so therefore individuals have easy access to the weekly sessions.

The program is inexpensive and provides numerous different roles for the participants to encourage commitment and reflect the different level of interest, skills and fitness levels of the individuals. The inclusivity of the program has seen it continually grow every year and the LGFA have now engaged with other sporting bodies to encourage further physical activity programs geared towards increasing and promoting a healthy lifestyle for a modern society.

Discussion

There are significant barriers that limit the opportunities for increasing multiple forms of physical activity. From social and physical barriers to mental barriers, many individuals are struggling to engage in enough activities that would be considered a healthy and well-being lifestyle. The evidence is consistent in highlighting that many educational authorities, governments, and particularly sporting bodies need to do more to increase physical activity opportunities and to eliminate potential barriers. By understanding what the problems are only then can these organizations effectively implement a new direction in living a healthy lifestyle. Additionally, evidence from research has shown that males

tend to engage in physical activity much more than females and that as individuals age they participate less due to increasing barriers.

Motivators /Barrier to participate

It is important for organizations to promote and encourage participation and at the same time try to limit and reduce potential barriers. What is important in motivating people to partake in physical activity is to highlight the social, mental, and physical benefits. Overall previous research has showed that there is a divergent in thinking of motivations to participate in physical activity. Some authors highlight that for females' part of the desire for physical activity was mental (enjoyment) and physical (health benefits) more than social, while others have stated that social (community and friendship) was just as important as the other benefits that played a role in joining activities. No matter which is the most important, all of the benefits are vital in helping to create a program that would entice females to start or reengage in physical activities. Additionally, it is extremely important for organizations to be able to adequately promote these benefits to individuals so they should be concerned with which through media channels effectively reach the desired population. For example, given that society has transformed to a technological based society, it would be reasonable that organizations utilize social media as well as the more traditional modes of information to promote any benefits of new programs. Certainly, improving the motivation of individuals will help them overcome the potential barriers. If it is social barriers that highlight time, child care, family, costs, friendship barriers then organizations can develop motivations by being flexible in regards to what and when they offer. For example, offering a low-cost trial period, or free child care, or social networking can help alleviate worries in regards to certain social barriers. Likewise, for mental/physical barriers, organizations can encourage a social based activity framework that ensures that it is a fun based activity rather than solely based on competition. This would help those people who are potentially intimidated by a lack of skill or fear of embarrassment. Organizations that implement and encourage an inclusive, welcoming, and flexible attitude towards encouraging people to participate in physical activity will be able to attract people who have been wary and fearful of physical activity.

The LGFA is one of those organizations that has embraced a new approach to becoming a more inclusive organization to encourage more females to play Gaelic football and, more importantly, to become more physically active and lead a healthier lifestyle. The LGFA have been at the forefront of creating programs that have been used to encourage participation in sports and physical activity. Though the LGFA is a relatively young sporting body, it has continually made impressive and concrete strides to improve Gaelic football for women in Ireland and to continually increase opportunities for participation. From an early age its nursery programs target children in schools and clubs to introduce them to Gaelic football and more importantly to the concept that sports and physical activity should be for females as well as males. Programs continue throughout primary and high schools, to universities to the local club levels. Additionally, the LGFA have created coaching programs to help educate more female coaches and games development programs that encourage continuing education in games coaching and strategy geared towards females. Similarly, the LGFA has reached out internationally and has official footprints in

nearly every corner of the globe. Without a doubt, the LGFA is presently one of the leading female sporting bodies in Ireland in encouraging actionable plans and policies to promote female participation.

The nursery programs are essential for introducing the sport and concept of physical activity to young females and the local clubs then continue this encouragement through underage levels. This provides lots of opportunities at a young age. Unfortunately, it is around the teenage years that many barriers to participation appear to become more problematic. Whether there are physical barriers such as height, weight, or disability, or mental barriers such as self-esteem or fear many teenagers who are not "good" players drop out or do not continue to play. Likewise, "good" players can find a pathway to be successful in local club and county level, which is the elite level of the LGFA. While competition is certainly an important part of any sport or physical activity, too much focus on competition itself leads to a higher rate of drop out from the sport given that only a select few reach this standard and the age of the average participant at club and county level is continually becoming younger. What this creates is the idea that there is "no place" for the "not so good" teenage player and the "over the hill" adult player.

Thus, the LGFA have created programs that target teenage players and adults who no longer participate in the sport. The adult based program is the previously mentioned G4MO and has been a success so far. The G4MO was set up to attract adults who are played the game before or who had never played before due to previous barriers. The program was based within a non-competitive and social framework. The social based framework has led to the program being very successful across Ireland with thousands of adult females taking part in games and tournaments based on fun and enjoyment. Indeed, the LGFA have stated that the program has been successful with women of all ages especially since experience of playing was not necessary. Without a doubt, the social benefits and the idea that the program encouraged inclusivity based on gender rather than skill or fitness levels had a huge draw for adult women who would have been hesitant about playing a sport of engaging in physical activity. As well as reducing the barriers of being afraid, the program also reduced the time and cost barriers as it was based locally and was a minimal cost per weekly session. This allowed the participants to not have to travel any great distances and only pay when they showed up to play. Another substantial benefit was that the program because of its lack of age limitations allowed family members across generations to play together and engage in physical activity together. Many of the participants were older mothers and young mothers who could bring their children to the sessions/games and thus could play a sport without having to stress about finding childcare or the cost of childcare.

G4MO met the needs of increasing female physical activity within many communities by being utilized as a form of sport for all. The program encouraged older and younger mothers and others to play a sport they had never played before or to rejoin a sport they had stopped playing. The program stimulated social connections across families and through different generations within the community which increased social cohesion. This allowed the participants to be more motivated to continue to play and improve their physical health and mental health. The increase in numbers from the beginning of the program has highlighted that if a program is based on fun and enjoyment, is flexible with schedules and costs, games not based on talent and skills, encouragement of

self-belief and confidence can and does provide the motivation to overcome barriers that prohibit or reduce physical activity. This approach has made playing sport and participating in physical activity an attractive opportunity no matter a woman's age or skill level.

Conclusion

Many organizations pay "lip service" to the idea of promoting and encouraging a flexible and sustainable program to increase physical activity among females. Certainly, the overall influence of the barriers has a negative impact on the overall success of many programs to increase participation but these should not be a deterrent in attempting to implement such programs. The benefits of a successful program are immense and have positive long-term implications for individuals and society in general. From improving a person's overall health, increasing the visibility of a healthy lifestyle, and cultivating social and community connections the benefits of increased physical activity are key to emphasizing the essential nature of a successful physical activity program.

The LGFAs G4MO program in one program that has been both a strategic and policy success. Though the program is still in its infancy, the outcomes have highlighted that females are "buying in" to its objectives due to the overall goals of the program. The programs flexibility, inclusivity, localization, and focus on fun rather than competition has ensured that females who would not normally play Gaelic sports and those who had left the sport would join up. The fact that multiple generations can be physically active together and that the sport is open to all means that the emphasis of fun and togetherness is a positive motivation. That is the crux of the program itself, its goals and objectives are strong motivational opportunities that help to overcome the potential barriers for engaging in physical activity.

Going forward, other sporting organizations and governmental bodies should analyze the programs objectives, strategies, and goals that have been so successfully utilized by the LGFA to increase the motivation to engage in physical activity for females of different ages and skills and just as importantly, for females who were reticent about taking part in physical activity. Since the G4MO initiative was started only a few years ago, the participation numbers have steadily increased and this has underlined the positive nature of the G4MOs program. A well-structured program that emphasizes family, fun, and an enjoyable learning environment will encourage motivation to become active and to promote a healthy lifestyle both physically and mentally and the G4MO is that program.

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