

HAPPY VALLEY FITLINK



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The Importance of Regular Movement for
Individuals with Disabilities

Presentation Outline



- The importance of physical activity for you and your clients
 - Why is regular physical activity so important for your clients?
 - How much physical activity is recommended?
- How to increase physical activity throughout the day?
- Happy Valley FitLink a community engagement opportunity to form relationships and improve quality of life through improved wellness.
 - What is Happy Valley FitLink?
 - How are we unique compared to other physical activity programs?
 - Why you should get your clients involved?






Benefits of regular physical activity for those with disabilities

- Regular physical activity can:
 - Improve quality of life
 - Life expectancy
 - Decrease the risk of comorbid conditions
 - Decrease the risk of death from preventable causes
 - Improves mental health (ex decrease depressive symptoms)
 - Improve the ability to maintain independence or provide assistance with mobility
 - Improve heart health
 - Increase strength



How much physical activity is recommended?



The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) recommends adults participate in 150 minutes of moderate physical activity each week

If you cannot meet 150 minutes of physical activity weekly that is OK! Any amount of physical activity is good for you

ACSM also recommends to break up the amount of time being sedentary to improve health

Your clients are likely not meeting these recommendations



- Individuals with intellectual disabilities are extremely less likely to meet these recommendations or to even engage in any type of physical activity
- This has negative impact on individuals quality of life, independence and life expectancy



How to increase physical activity throughout the day

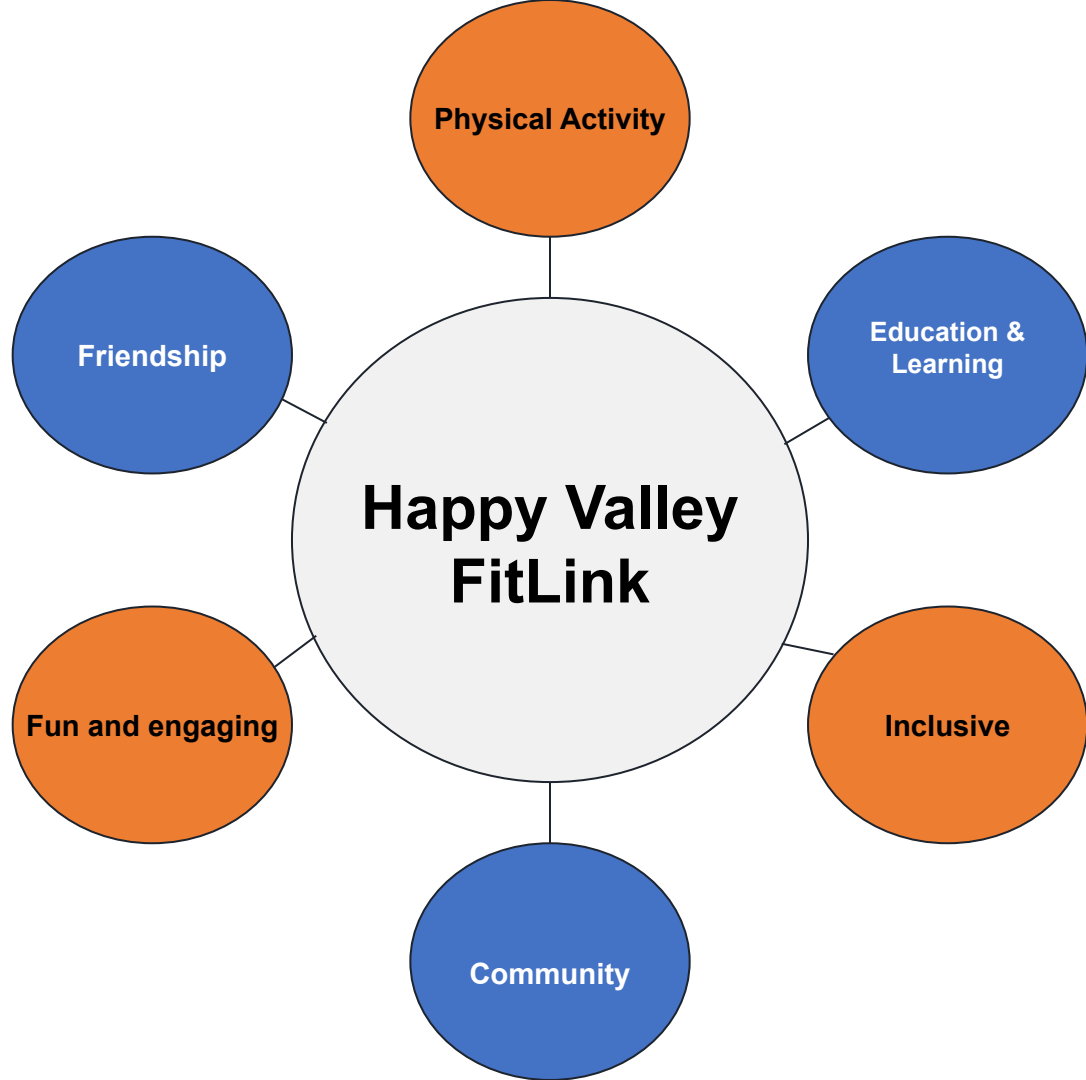


- Accessible options that are fun, engaging and focused on the individuals interests are key
- There are additional benefits if these activities are done in a group setting because you can decrease rates of loneliness and depression and provide an opportunity for socialization
- Physical activity can be:
 - A 5 minute dance break to someone's favorite song
 - A short walk after a meal
 - Having a dance party during the week
 - Playing an active game such as the Wii
 - Parking the car farther away from the store when shopping



What is Happy Valley FitLink?







Our Mission

- **To be an all-inclusive wellness community** for individuals with intellectual disabilities to develop meaningful relationships and express themselves through movement.
- All of our services for individuals and their caregivers are free:
 - Group fitness classes
 - Holistic educational seminars
 - Online resources



A Community Participation Opportunity!



Happy Valley FitLink is a one-of-a-kind community-based program focused on the needs of the individual while reducing the number of barriers to participate with our program.



Classes and educational seminars are constructed based on feedback and input from our Happy Valley FitLink community and are always focused on creating meaningful supportive relationships with peers.

Fitness classes built with the individual's interests, feedback and abilities in mind, that are **always adaptable** and fun for our friends to form and foster relationships..



Class Model Unlike Traditional Group Exercise

- Our model places a larger emphasis upon forming relationships with everyone at class when compared to other traditional group exercise classes
 - Each class (virtual and in-person) begins with a period of social interaction and engagement where instructors foster/build relationships with and between participants
- Our unique instructor model ensures everyone is challenged based on their ability level to engage in a physiologically demanding workout that will progressively adapt with the individual and allows our friends to leave feeling accomplished!

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Join in with
Happy Valley
FitLink for
weekly virtual
group exercise
classes

- Zoom provides a unique opportunity to decrease social isolation for individuals and allows our Happy Valley FitLink community to grow without geographical barriers.
- Our zoom classes are structured very similar to our in-person classes but utilize resources that we create via PowerPoint, YouTube videos and word documents to give visual cues to participants.



Gamification of Exercises

Many of our group exercise classes gamify exercise through:

- the use of custom made fitness board games
- relay races that challenge the individual physically and cognitively
- exercise trivia on topics like Disney to name a few



Flexible Options

- Happy Valley FitLink decreases barriers and increases meaningful participation to build our all-inclusive wellness community
 - Classes are always free
 - Free downloadable at home workouts
 - Short follow along youtube workouts
 - Variation videos on our YouTube help to increase self-efficacy

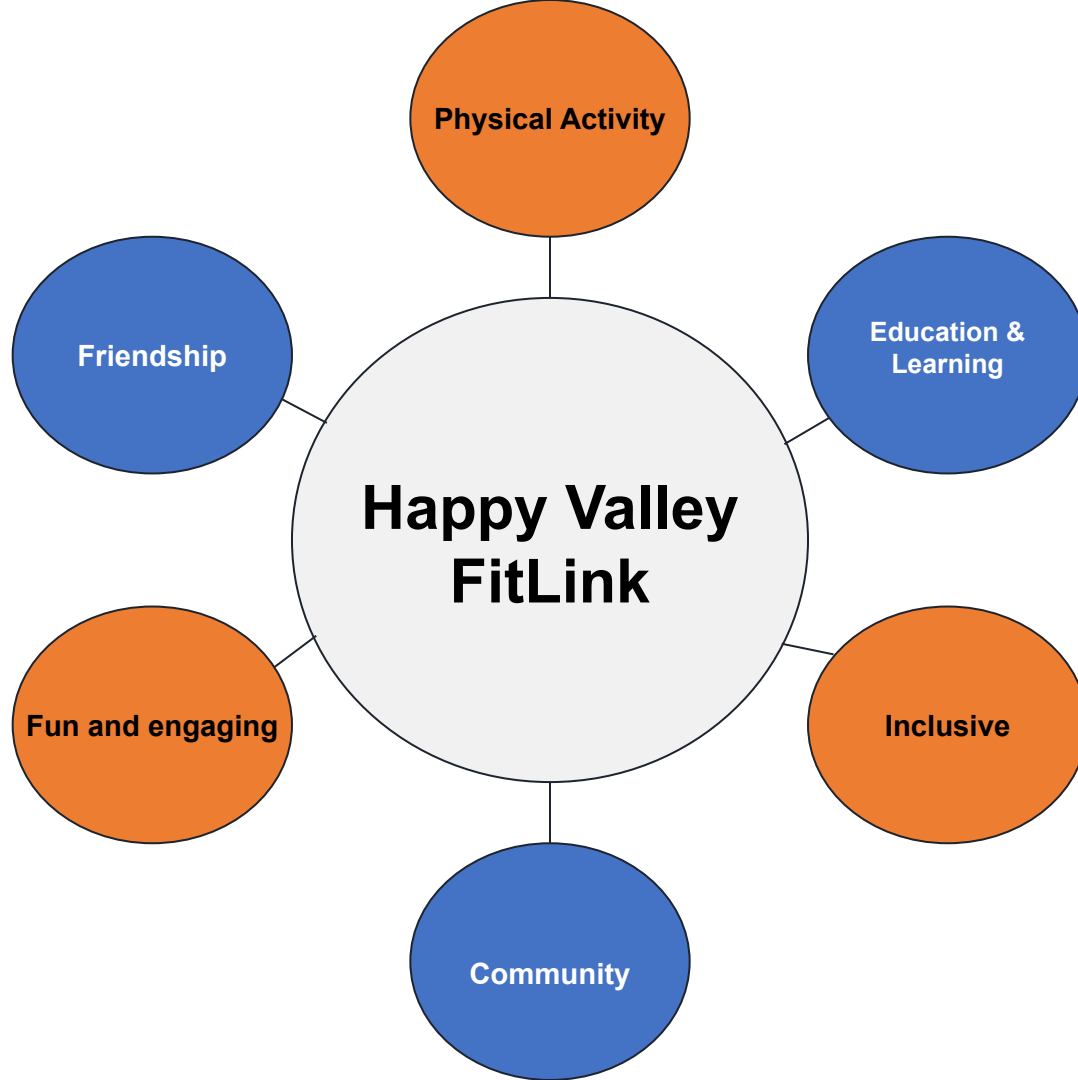


Cardio Drumming and Free Dance

Cardio drumming is our groups favorite activity. By using a yoga ball and a bucket we will drum out to different songs to choreographed fitness drumming routine that accounts for strengthening of each muscle group (upper body and lower body) and cardiovascular fitness

Cardio drumming Videos







Future plans

- Continue to build our online video and home exercise resource library
- Begin offering in person classes for 18 and younger and continue to offer zoom classes for all ages
- Continue to collaborate with different groups and organizations to continue to expand our reach to help more individuals have access to physical activity

Key Points

Happy Valley FitLink provides **free inclusive** fitness classes and educational seminars that can be accessed from the comfort and safety of your home.

All classes are programmed with the individual in mind and Happy Valley FitLink volunteers are present to ensure that individuals can receive one on one feedback and assistance when needed.

Happy Valley FitLink is far more than physical activity, through our virtual fitness classes participants have maintained and form meaningful relationships with peers with and without disabilities.

Takeaways for Providers

- Neurodiverse individuals regularly fall short of recommended physical activity guidelines and have a life expectancy up to 20 years less than neurotypical individuals.
- Physical activity can decrease the risk of preventable comorbidities frequently related to physical inactivity, and increase quality of life and longevity.
- Health behavior interventions could benefit individuals.
- Virtual platforms provide individuals with the ability to stay connected and reduces the barriers to participate in our inclusive wellness program
- Physical activity can be broken up into short bouts throughout the day

Fostering Relationships within the Community

- The free group exercise classes and wellness seminars Happy Valley FitLink offers would not be possible without the help of our wonderful community partners and Penn State Kinesiology interns we would like to thank them now. We are proud of the relationships that we have formed with members of our community and organizations within our community that share our goal to create an inclusive wellness community to increase quality of life for individuals with disabilities. Specifically we would like to thank Jamie SanFilippo and Jacob Schiffer of the Centre County YMCA, Caroline Hetrick of the Grace Lutheran Church of State College, PA.





Thank you for
your time!

- Happy Valley FitLink is always looking to form new connections!
- Follow us on our social media pages **@happyvalleyfitlink** on Instagram and Facebook to stay up to date on our fitness and educational seminar schedule
- Or email us at happyvalleyfitlink@gmail.com

Questions?



References

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