Silver Opportunity
Mapping Exercise Assets for Older Adults in Nanaimo
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Introduction

Connecting Nanaimo’s aging population with active participation resources has many benefits. Regular exercise and meaningful social connection lowers the risk of disease, prevents cognitive decline, increases mobility and most importantly, can be fun and available to all socioeconomic groups. However, many people, especially older adults (65+yrs), struggle to meet exercise guidelines. The purpose of my project was to create a functional asset map connecting Nanaimo’s 65+ population with exercise assets, and provide stakeholders with information, connections, and recommendations for programming.

Over 88% of Canadians 65+ are inactive

Physical inactivity is the 4th leading risk factor for global mortality

Social isolation is associated with 5.4 odds of comorbidity

Collected information by interviewing non-profit organizations (N=5) and public health professionals (N=3)

Networked at the Nanaimo Health Forum, a leadership speaker series, a physical literacy speaker and a WorkBC jobfair

Analyzed the opportunities that Nanaimo’s assets afford for increasing activity levels among older adults with barriers

Reflected upon my emerging knowledge of health leadership and my contribution to a collaborative research team

Created a network of contacts, an asset map, a recommendations document and infographic, and a plan for future research

Advocated for connectedness of community and longevity of the project by sharing findings, contacts & recommendations

What I heard...

Depression and anxiety rates are skyrocketing among youth, as rates of comorbidity among older adults are increasing

Transportation, cost, and lack of volunteers are the largest barriers to access

Funding for programming that supports social opportunities for older adults to exercise is unstable, unpredictable and unreliable

Recommendations

Increase interaction among generations

Increase access via social connections

Next Steps

Follow up with stakeholders, share resources, make connections, and pass on to upcoming students

Complete my Master’s of Public Health with a focus on environmental and occupational health