

Analyzing the Efficacy of the Thrive Program to Promote Joy in Participants: A Mixed Methods Study

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Categories: Medical Education, Public Health

Keywords: disabilities, physical wellness, mental wellness, joy

How to cite this poster

Fraser L, O'Neill M, Knibbe T, et al. (2021) Analyzing the Efficacy of the Thrive Program to Promote Joy in Participants: A Mixed Methods Study. *Cureus* 13(4): e.

Abstract

Introduction/Background: Thrive is an adult day program at the Abilities Centre in Whitby, Ontario for individuals with developmental disabilities. Thrive promotes the well-being of its participants through a variety of programming including, Drama, Arts, Sports and Fitness, and Dance Fit [2]. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the Thrive program was moved to a virtual platform [2]. An important aspect of well-being that Abilities Centre focuses on is the concept of joy; a distinct and positive emotion that is associated with an individual's well-being [3]. The aim of this research project was to understand the role Thrive has in promoting Joy within participants.

Methods: During Thrive's Winter 2021 session (January to March), participants engaged in a variety of virtual programming designed to increase their well-being. A mixed methods approach was used to determine the efficacy of Joy promotion in the Thrive program. A questionnaire was sent out mid-way, and at the end of the program to evaluate General Self-Efficacy (GSE), Decision-Making (DMQ) and Quality of Life (QOL). Participants level of Joy was also measured prior to program start and at the end of programming. Observational analyses was performed over twelve hours of programming that encompassed Drama, Arts, Sports and Fitness and Dance Fit. Observational notes were coded and analysed to help draw conclusions regarding the research question from the program sessions [1].

Results: Qualitative analysis demonstrated the importance of positive attitudes in having successful engagement in the Thrive program. Observations also highlighted the importance of intentional program engagement for Thrive to be successful at promoting joy. Additionally, the development of relationships between participants and participants and hosts was a contributing factor to joy promotion in the Thrive program. Questionnaire scores demonstrated a higher level of GSE, DMQ, QOL and both Physical and Emotional joy in the post-program questionnaires in comparison to the pre/mid-questionnaire.

Discussion: Joy was evident throughout the Thrive program through physical displays of joy, positivity, intentional program engagement and relationship development. Questionnaires also demonstrated increased levels of joy as well as other factors related to well-being in the post-questionnaires. Future studies should determine more effective ways to facilitate data collection. Additionally, the program should be examined to determine effective methods to promote participant-participant interaction.

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Published 04/07/2021

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