

# Evaluating the Feasibility for Community Partners to Implement an Adapted Physical Activity Toolkit for Individuals with Disabilities

Lily Bihun<sup>1</sup>, Zachary Morris<sup>1</sup>, Charlotte Workman, CCRP<sup>2</sup>, Lesley Cottrell, PhD<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>West Virginia University, Department of Exercise Physiology; <sup>2</sup>West Virginia University Center for Excellence in Disabilities; <sup>3</sup>West Virginia University, Department of Pediatrics and Center for Excellence in Disabilities

## Background

- Half of adults with disabilities get no aerobic physical activity despite the fact that most are able to participate in some form of physical activity.<sup>1</sup>
- Only 44% of individuals with disabilities received the recommendation from their provider to engage in physical activity.<sup>2</sup>
- Relatedly, individuals with disabilities are 3 times more likely to have heart disease, stroke, diabetes, or cancer than those without disabilities.<sup>1</sup>
- Adapted physical activity programs are limited in number particularly for rural individuals and varied in focus and outcome.<sup>3</sup>

## Objectives

- The purpose of this study was to test the feasibility of an adapted physical activity program designed to increase aerobic capacity and strength across varied settings.

## Methods

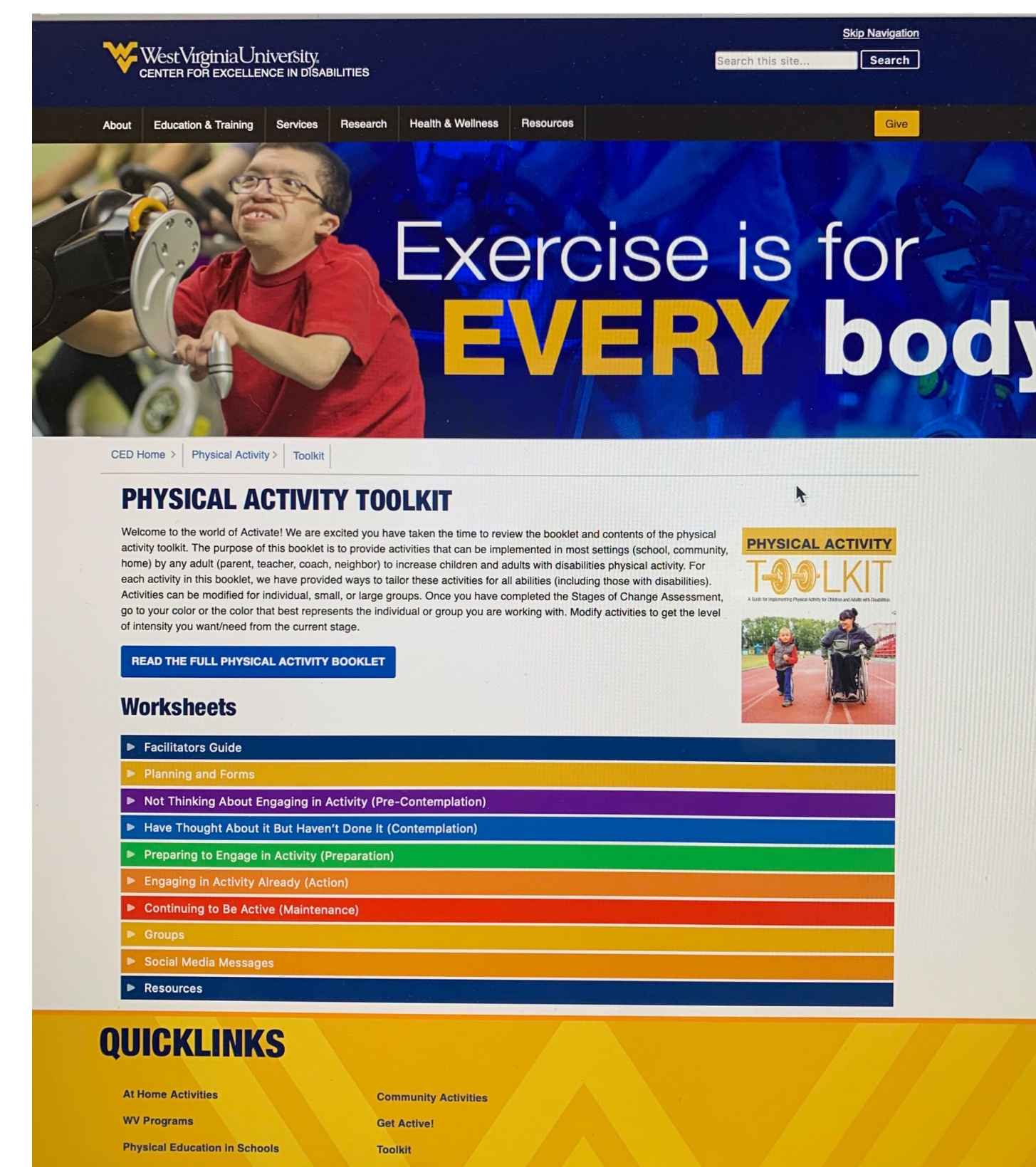
- We identified facilitators throughout a rural state in the Mid-Atlantic region
- Facilitators were defined as any individual who is interested in implementing a physical activity curriculum with at least one individual with a disability over the course of the program.
- Facilitators completed a survey before they were trained on how to implement the program and received the adaptive toolkit.
  - Survey responses assessed facilitator intent and reasons for implementing the program; goals; previous experience working with someone on physical activity goals.
- Facilitators were also sent a survey in late 2020 to assess if they had implemented the program, information about that implementation event (# of individuals, # sessions), and experience with using the toolkit.

- How much does toolkit influence activity for the individuals?
- What is the most useful item in the toolkit; least useful?
- What challenges or barriers have you experienced?
- Do you plan to use it again?
- Have you partnered with anyone to use the toolkit?

## Description of Program

- Activate! Project is an evidence-based physical activity intervention
- Based on Stages of Change Theory
- Modified activities for varied abilities
- Materials include:
  - Facilitators guide
  - Planning and forms
  - Activities and materials/ level
  - Tailoring for groups
  - Social media messages
  - Other resources
- Available on-line

- Toolkit includes (examples):
  - Duffel bag
  - Sand bags
  - Balls of various sizes
  - Jumping ropes
  - Strength bands
  - Activity booklets
  - Water bottles
  - Fitbits



## Facilitators

- 14 facilitators throughout the state were identified and confirmed interest
  - 11 represented companies already providing services to individuals with disabilities
  - 2 represented community services (Family Resource Networks)
  - 1 represented local school system
  - On average, facilitators engaged in 60-90 minutes of daily activity themselves
- Majority requested Fitbit option for the toolkit to use with their groups
- Most (n=9) intended to use the toolkit with a small group or large classroom
- Instructors wanted to:
  - Increase physical activity with clients
  - Aid clients in having a more active life
  - Set up some activities for self-contained classrooms
- Previous experience with physical activity (1 very little to 4 a lot):  $x = 2.75$  (SD= 1.48)
- 6 facilitators used the toolkit at least once between November 2019-Present; 25 individuals with disabilities received the materials
- 3 facilitators used the toolkit more than 4 times

## Feasibility of Toolkit

- 4 of the 6 facilitators who had used the toolkit reported positive changes in the physical activity of those who received the toolkit (facilitator report)
- On a scale of 1-10 (1=no influence and 10=very influential, facilitators thought the toolkit was influential –  $X = 6.25$  (SD = 0.83)
- The most influential items were:
  - Books for different activities in class
  - Fitbit
  - Instruction booklets for various abilities
- The least influential items were:
  - The exercise guide for select populations (facilitators did not work with this population)
- Facilitators felt the activities were enjoyable to their groups –  $X 2.50$  (SD = 0.87); range 1-4.
- Barriers included:
  - COVID

## Conclusions

- Despite limited face-to-face options during COVID, about half of the facilitators who originally trained on the program completed at least one group.
- Challenges for implementing the activities were limited if not reported.
- Certain elements of the toolkit were preferred including the tailored activities and everyday materials for those activities.
- Despite having a varied background with physical activity, facilitators felt confident in using the materials and implementing the program.
- Some of the more tailored items may not go into the toolkit but be available upon demand.
- Next steps would be to continue to assess feasibility as we begin to interact in the public setting more.

## References

<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. MMWR. Vital signs: Disability and physical activity – United States, 2009–2012. Accessed at: [https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6318a5.htm?s\\_cid=mm6318a5\\_w](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6318a5.htm?s_cid=mm6318a5_w)

<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Inactivity related to chronic disease in adults with disabilities. Accessed on: <https://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/division-information/media-tools/dpk/vs-disability-activity/index.html#>.

<sup>3</sup> Case, L., Schram, B., Jung, J., Leung, W. and Yun, J., 2020. A meta-analysis of the effect of adapted physical activity service-learning programs on college student attitudes toward people with disabilities. *Disability and Rehabilitation*, pp.1-13.