Why was this forum important?

Long-term balance and mobility limitations resulting from chronic disabling conditions contribute to physical inactivity. Exercise programs appropriate for people with persistent balance and mobility deficits can help to maintain activity levels and promote health and independence in community living.

To facilitate access to exercise participation, physical therapists at the Toronto Rehabilitation Institute-University Health Network (TRI-UHN) led by Jo-Anne Howe developed a group, task-oriented exercise program called “Together in Movement and Exercise” or TIME. Physical therapists train and provide ongoing support to fitness instructors to deliver the TIME program in community centres. Champions from TRI-UHN, stroke and regional healthcare networks have facilitated partnerships and implementation of the TIME program in at least 25 centres run by not-for-profit recreation providers such as the City of Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division, YMCA, and Abilities Centre. Similar programs are offered in Thunder Bay, ON (Keep Moving With Stroke), Hamilton, ON (Fit for Function) and St. John’s, NL (NeuroFit).

Our goal is to enable access to community exercise programs for people with balance and mobility limitations across Canada. To help achieve this goal, a comprehensive understanding of the challenges that stakeholders face when implementing community exercise programs like the TIME program was needed.

Who took part in this forum?

Fifty-three stakeholders, including physical therapists, fitness instructors, recreation and healthcare managers, researchers, educators, health policy experts, stroke network representatives, trainees, and TIME participants and their caregivers, participated in a one-day meeting held May 30, 2014 in Toronto, Ontario.

What took place during this forum?

- We reviewed the research literature supporting the physical, social and cognitive benefits of group, task-oriented community-based exercise programs for people with balance and mobility limitations.
- Attendees shared their experiences implementing community exercise programs to begin to develop a community of practice.
- TIME participants and family members described their experiences seeking out and participating in exercise programs and the perceived benefits.
- Expert panel members Dr. Mark Bayley and Dr. Samir Sinha shared expert advice on strategies to obtain funding for TIME implementation.
- We held round-table discussions and voting activities to brainstorm and prioritize challenges to implementing community exercise programs and strategies to address them.
What did we find?

We identified seven major challenges and prioritized strategies to address them.

**Challenge #1: Insufficient funding for recreation providers to run exercise programs and for healthcare providers to offer training and support**

Strategy: Submit a proposal to regional health authorities (e.g., local health integration networks) to fund exercise programs in the region

√ 74% rated this strategy as a high priority

**Challenge #2: Maintenance of program integrity: delivering exercise programs as intended both at start up and over time**

Strategy: Consistent use of existing training materials (e.g., toolkit slides for instructor training and task-related exercise program guidelines)

√ 71% rated this strategy as a high priority

**Challenge #3: Sustainability of exercise programs (i.e., continued provision of programs over time)**

Strategy: Ongoing inter-professional communication and collaboration between rehabilitation and recreation providers

√ 88% rated this strategy as a high priority

**Challenge #4: Marketing of the exercise program**

Strategy: Establish links with physicians and healthcare providers to promote program referral

√ 67% rated this strategy as a high priority

**Challenge #5: Challenge of training fitness instructors to have multiple skills required to deliver programs**

Strategy: Consult key people (e.g., TIME educators at TRI-UHN) as problems arise

√ 68% rated this strategy as a high priority

**Challenge #6: Lack of access to recruit exercise participants directly from rehabilitation hospitals**

Strategy: Form links between rehabilitation and recreation providers through network meetings and promotional visits

√ 88% rated this strategy as a high priority

**Challenge #7: Exercise programs full and not open to new registrants**

Strategy: Offer additional programs at same or other locations

√ 69% rated this strategy as a high priority

Strategy: Offer programs at various levels (e.g., for graduates (maintenance program) and people with severe deficits)

√ 62% rated this strategy as a high priority
Most significant accomplishments of the workshop described by participants:

1. Collaboration and networking
2. Sharing information about implementation challenges and how to overcome them
3. Problem solving and prioritizing efforts for next steps/action

Next Steps

Advisory Group: Sixteen meeting participants have formed an advisory group to guide action plans for education, practice, research, and health policy.

TIME Toolkit: The 2nd edition will soon be released. Please contact Jo-Anne Howe to obtain the toolkit at jo-anne.howe@uhn.ca.

Publications: An abstract describing meeting results was submitted for presentation at the World Confederation for Physical Therapy Congress (Singapore, May 2015). A manuscript will be submitted to a scientific journal.

Contact Information

If you have questions or are interested in being involved with the TIME program, please contact Nancy Salbach at nancy.salbach@utoronto.ca or Jo-Anne Howe at jo-anne.howe@uhn.ca.

TIME Program Resources

Website: http://www.uhn.ca/TorontoRehab/PatientsFamilies/Clinics_Tests/TIME

List of Programs: http://www.uhn.ca/TorontoRehab/PatientsFamilies/Clinics_Tests/TIME/Pages/health_care_professionals.aspx


CTV Video: http://toronto.ctvnews.ca/video?playlistId=1.1385879

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TIME Participants & Families: We wish to thank the TIME participants and family members for attending and sharing their inspirational experiences.

Expert Panel Members: We wish to thank our expert panellists for sharing their expertise on the role of healthcare policy and funding in the implementation of community exercise programs.

Dr. Mark Bayley, Medical Director, Brain and Spinal Cord Rehab Program, TRI-UHN

Dr. Samir Sinha, Director of Geriatrics, Mount Sinai, UHN, Provincial Lead, Ontario’s Seniors Strategy

Meeting organizers (from left to right): Saira Merali, Diem Baldry, Jo-Anne Howe, and Nancy Salbach
Enhancing Health Outcomes and Well-Being of People with Balance and Mobility Limitations by Expanding the Implementation of Community Task-Oriented Exercise Programs: A Knowledge Mobilization Workshop

Meeting Participants

Researchers and Trainees
Nancy Salbach, Principal Investigator and Associate Professor, University of Toronto
Ruth Barclay, Assistant Professor, University of Manitoba
Michelle Ploughman, Assistant Professor, Memorial University
Ada Tang, Assistant Professor, McMaster University
Saira Merali, MSc candidate, University of Toronto
Pam Takhar, Research Assistant to Dr. Salbach

Healthcare Professionals
Karen Brunton, Clinical Educator, Physiotherapy, Toronto Rehabilitation Institute-University Health Network (TRI-UHN)
Jo-Anne Howe, Clinical Educator, Physiotherapy, TRI-UHN, Lecturer, University of Toronto
Melissa Lang, Physical Therapist, Orillia Soldiers’ Memorial Hospital
Bessy Megoudis, Physical Therapist, Cavendish Health & Social Services Centre
Alison McDonald, Physical Therapist, Nova Scotia Rehabilitation Centre
Jason Moller, Clinical Supervisor, British Columbia Fraser Health Authority
Jennifer Neirinckx, Physical Therapist, TRI-UHN

Healthcare System
Esmé French, Regional Rehabilitation Coordinator, Northwestern Ontario Regional Stroke Network
Rebecca Bowes, Regional Coordinator, Independence Centre and Network and Health Sciences North (ICAN)
Nancy Cox, Chef d'administration de programme, Cavendish Health & Social Services Centre
Cathy Irwin, Senior Manager, Business Management, TRI-UHN

Barb Armstrong, Fitness Supervisor, Whitchurch-Stouffville Leisure Centre
Lorene Bodiam, Advocate for People with Disabilities, City of Toronto Parks, Forestry & Recreation
Chris Coombes, Community Recreation Programmer, East York Civic Centre, City of Toronto Parks, Forestry & Recreation
Valerie Dickson, General Manager, Wasaga Beach YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka
Tara Gregor, General Manager, Gravenhurst YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka

Elizabeth Hill, Community Recreation Programmer: Active Living, Wallace Emerson Community Centre, City of Toronto Parks, Forestry & Recreation
Marilyn Hovius, Supervisor, Adult Fitness and Individual Conditioning, Gravenhurst and Orillia of YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka
Kelly McClure, Assistant Executive Director, Harbourfront Community Centre
Karen Pulla, VP of Health & Wellness, Barrie YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka

TIME Participants and Caregivers
Edgar Allin
Connie & Danny Cardoso
Elizabeth Flavelle
Doreen and Jan Fraser
Sybil Geller
David Windeyer

Facilitator
Diem Baldry, Physical Therapist, CBI Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation

Knowledge Mobilization Workshop, May 30, 2014, Department of Physical Therapy, Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada