

The Special Olympics

Student 1, Student 2, Student 3

Student 4, Student 5

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Introduction

The Special Olympics Family Festival is a beautiful place for the athletes to watch a parade, meet local royalty, show off their singing skills, and even watch Elvis Presley perform on stage. The festival took place on Saturday, September 21st, at Lakeland College in Mattoon, IL. The Special Olympics Family Festival asks volunteers to be a "buddy for a day" this consists of one or two people walking around with an athlete and cheering them on in whatever they might do — for example, singing karaoke, playing skeeball, or just riding around on a hayrack ride. Choosing the Special Olympics Organization was easy because all the volunteers have just as much fun as the athletes. It is also an enriching experience because the Family Festival is considered one of the best days of the year. The top days of the year for the athletes are their birthday, Christmas, and then the Family Festival. Knowing that we can be a part of such a memorable day makes volunteering effortless.

Student 1:

Mental illness-related stigma in healthcare: Barriers to access and care and evidence-based solutions.

One of the Special Olympics' most critical elements is the lack of stigma and judgment surrounding the event. This is a day created specifically for these athletes. Members of the community who volunteer are doing their best to make the day a special one for them. In the article titled, "Mental illness-related stigma in healthcare," the prevalent stigma surrounding mental illness is discussed (2017). "Mental illness-related stigma, including that which exists in the healthcare system and among healthcare providers, has been identified as a major barrier to access treatment and recovery, as well as poorer quality physical care for persons with mental

illnesses" (Knaak, Mantler, & Szeto, 2017) People who have lived with a mental illness or handicap commonly report feeling devalued, dismissed, and dehumanized by health care professionals (Knaak, Mantler, & Szeto, 2017).

For people with mental illnesses, this created a barrier between the quality health care they need. This barrier leads to reduced physical care, symptoms not being taken seriously, and an increased risk for suicide (Knaak, Mantler, & Szeto, 2017). As community health nurses, it is important to assess yourself for any biases you already may have and adjust accordingly.

Although the Special Olympics is only one day a year, community members with mental illness can experience a mostly stigma-free day. They can enjoy activities specially created for them and be around peers that may be experiencing very similar day to day issues. The volunteers at these events' goals are to encourage and support their athletes for their entire experience.

Managing complexity in care of patients with intellectual and developmental disabilities:

Natural fit for the family physician as an expert generalist.

Athletes who attend the Special Olympics suffer from intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Managing the care of community members and patients with IDD can be challenging and complex. A broad knowledge base for differing IDD is crucial for an effective community health nurse. As new nurses or as a volunteer for a community event such as the Special Olympics cause lead to feelings of uncertainty and feeling overwhelmed. The special Olympics address these feelings for their volunteers by preparing each worker with a video, paring more patients with more complex IDD to more experiences volunteer, and providing a "cheat sheet" to each volunteer. Patients with IDD may have difficulty communicating their needs, and so this "cheat sheet" of each athlete is given to their buddies for the day. This sheet included specific needs, allergies, bathroom needs, and any other information specific for their

athlete as Grier mentions in her article, "[E]ach patient with IDD is unique, and care of patients with IDD requires knowledge of certain conditions, these considerations are readily identifiable, and family physicians as expert generalists are well equipped to provide excellent care to patients with IDD" (Greir, 2018).

Student 2:

Keeping Adults with Special Needs Active within a Residential Setting

Physical activity is crucial because it can prevent health issues. The article, "Keeping adults with special needs active within a residential setting," goes on to explain that people with disabilities are less likely to become physically active, which results in more chronic diseases. People with disabilities seem to be more prone to have high blood pressure or diabetes (Ferguson, 2019). Special Olympics takes part in this by making physical activity more exciting. For example, the family festival consisted of throwing a football, hitting a baseball, and even skeeball. These simple activities made a whole community of disabled people get active for a day. However, the Special Olympics is not every day. This article tells a story about a small town that implemented a new fitness facility, which encouraged adults with special needs to work out independently. The new facility promoted physical health and mental health with little supervision (Ferguson, 2019). I believe many other communities or facilities can implement a physical activity every day.

How to Improve Interactions with Special Needs Patients

Communication with special needs patients is easy to improve with five simple steps. In the article, "How to improve interactions with special needs patients," it explains that all one needs to communicate effectively is: prepare for the encounter in advance by reviewing patients'

histories, allow more time, consider their vulnerabilities, assume they understand what is being said to them, and disability is different from an illness (Clark, 2018). At the Special Olympics, before the volunteer received his or her athlete, they were given a paper that reviewed the athlete's unique needs. This helped the volunteer understand what is expected in the athlete and what to be aware about. Time is always a factor because it may take longer to do certain activities, such as getting dressed or undressed. The most important step is to assume patients understand what is being said to them. A lot of people think special needs patients do not know what is being said to them. It is crucial to explain what is being done in the hospital to the patient first and see if they understand rather than skipping that step and telling the caregiver. With these steps, it can become much more comfortable to communicate with special needs patients and allow exceptional healthcare.

Jonathan Fifer:

Effects of special Olympics international on social competence in persons with mental retardation

Socialization is a powerful tool for stimulating growth in individuals. It is essential for helping build self-esteem in people, especially those with mental handicaps. The Special Olympics is a place where people with different types of mental deficits and handicaps can come together and socialize with one another while enjoying games. The article written by Dykins and Cohen (1995) explores the effects of the Special Olympics games on social competence in persons with mental handicaps. Special Olympics International is the world's most extensive recreational sports program for those with mental handicaps (Cohen & Dykins, 1995). The study was conducted by "triangulating" three studies that looked at the social competence, adaptation,

and self-perceptions of 104 athletes from Team USA and compared them to another group of non-Olympians (Cohen & Dykins, 1995). The results found that the more time a person had spent in the Special Olympics, the higher their social competence and self-esteem tended to be (Cohen & Dykins, 1995). These findings help establish the idea that programs like Special Olympics International are beneficial to the athletes and foster growth as individuals.

Geriatric conditions in a population-based sample of older homeless adults

The article written by Crawford, Burns, and Fernie (2015) explores the psychosocial impact of involvement in the athletes' Special Olympics. The report states that individuals with intellectual disabilities are vulnerable to low self-esteem, leading to social exclusion and stress (Crawford, Burns, & Fernie, 2015). Studies have found that engaging in sports have positive effects on lowering stress, anxiety and reducing the levels of depression in individuals (Crawford, Burns, & Fernie, 2015). The study's design was a cross-sectional design that compared three groups, Special Olympics, Mencap sports, and Mencap, with no sports. The data was collected through the participants filling out questionnaires. The study found that self-esteem, quality of life, and stress were all positively associated with Special Olympics involvement (Crawford, Burns, & Fernie, 2015). Persons with mental handicaps can benefit immensely from participation in the Special Olympics.

Student 3:

Primary care of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities: 2018 Canadian consensus guidelines

Adults with intellectual disorders', primary care is important, as they often require more complex health needs. Sullivan et al. (2018) found that those with intellectual disorders benefit

from having a dedicated primary care provider as their health issues may be more prevalent. Patients should be engaged to find effective treatments. The plan should be confirmed with someone who knows the patient well to ensure they maintain healthcare appointments and monitor the patient's health needs. The patient needs to be addressed directly and have the patient clarify any issues they may be having.

Global initiative of the Special Olympics movement for people with intellectual disabilities

The Special Olympics are important social events for those with intellectual disabilities. The events give people with intellectual disabilities the opportunity to feel included and be part of an organization with activities. The sports included in the event are sports and ways for the athletes to display courage, fitness, and the joy they have for life. According to Myśliwiec and Damentko (2015), the Special Olympics gives intellectually disabled athletes a chance not to feel excluded. The events occur on local levels worldwide and are organized by caretakers and volunteers of the athletes.

Student 4:

Individualized Education for Children with Special Needs

Many of the kids at Special Olympics deal with day-to-day caretakers who help them with everything from daily living activities to range of motion exercises. Having interactions with other children with the same or similar disabilities can make them not feel lonely. Growing up can be a difficult process that is further complicated when a child has special needs— such as cognitive (thought, perception, and reasoning) disabilities, emotional and behavioral disorders, developmental delays, or physical disabilities (Career Clinic, 2018). Many of these children look forward each year to be able to compete and enjoy the time they have with all of the other

children who have similar disabilities. Education for many of these children is typically individualized due to distractions that occur by being in similar company. This article explores the individualized evaluation plan developed when the parents and the school administration, and the child all have an equal say in education. The parent's awareness and participation in the IEP process are essential to the child (Career Clinic, 2018). Events like Special Olympics provide children with special disabilities an opportunity to excel and grow in a group and individual setting.

The influence of self esteem and social support on the relationship between stigma and depressive symptomology in parents caring for children with intellectual disabilities

Children with disabilities may sometimes look different, but they do not always feel different than other people. Due to this innocence factor they have, often children with disabilities face low self-esteem. Group activities often help build self-esteem because it shows the children that their disabilities do not define them, and they shouldn't be holding themselves back. The article *The Influence of Self Esteem and Social Support on the Relationship Between Stigma and Depressive Symptomology in Parents Caring for Children with Intellectual Disabilities* (2015) talks about how parents who have disabled children report higher depression rates due to lower self-esteem. Special Olympics gives each child a chance to feel like they are not alone with their disabilities and that they can also compete like other people.

Moreover, perceived caregiver stigma was positively associated with depressive symptomatology. In contrast, self esteem was negatively associated with depressive symptomatology, suggesting that parents of children with disabilities who reported more caregiver stigma and lower self esteem also reported higher depressive symptomatology

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(Cantwell et al., 2015). I believe that special Olympics events give disabled children a fighting chance and help them gain a higher self-confidence about themselves.

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