EDUCATING FOR LEISURE:
EXPLORING CORE CONCEPTS

LEISURE DEVELOPMENT COURSE
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FACILITATOR

Carol Petersen has a degree in Recreation Administration from the University of Alberta and has extensive experience facilitating community development and wellness processes.

Her passion for the field comes from the potential that Carol sees in educating others to use recreation to build healthy, fulfilling lifestyles and vital communities.

Carol has created a framework to help people make appropriate decisions for leisure. Through a series of checklists and self-discovery processes individuals learn the skills and attitudes to create personal and community wellness.
HOPES FOR THE WEEK

Learn about leisure education and how it is relevant to you personally, and professionally.

After this introductory session, you will:
• be familiar with the concepts of leisure education and leisure literacy
• understand the value of recreation, leisure and educating others about using them for wellness
• be able to describe the components in a leisure education process
CONTEXT AND HISTORY

✓ Having the capacity to make informed leisure choices is critical to personal and community well-being

✓ The concept of leisure education is not new although application in mainstream recreation has been limited.

✓ Leisure education must become core to recreation, healthcare and social services so that as a society we can achieve and sustain higher levels of health and quality of life.
RESEARCH SAYS ....

Leisure education is an old idea that is being examined with renewed vigour in Canada. Practitioners and researchers from various disciplines (e.g., health, justice, education, recreation) are recognising anew that many people who could benefit from leisure or recreation opportunities in their communities are unable to do so because they lack leisure literacy.

Leisure literacy refers to the knowledge, skills and confidence to engage in personally meaningful, health-enhancing leisure. Leisure education is a key means to enhance leisure literacy.

- Hutchinson, Susan and Robertson, Brenda (2012)
WHAT IS LEISURE EDUCATION?

Information, activities and processes that:

• increase awareness of leisure and its value
• equip people to create quality leisure experiences tailored to their own needs and assets

Not prescriptive (not one right way; there are many ways to educate – it is a continuum)
learned

...Having leisure doesn't mean we know how to use it, any more than having an airplane means we know how to fly.
BROADENING AWARENESS OF LEISURE

Resource: Alphabet Challenge

- Recreation / Leisure Activities
- Recreation / Leisure Settings
- Outcomes/Benefits of Leisure
DEFINING RECREATION AND LEISURE

..... Often Related to Time
..... Personal and Individual
..... Satisfying
..... Our Choice
..... An End in Itself
..... A Means to An End
..... Learned or Re-learned
DEFINITIONS OF RECREATION

“All those things that a person or group chooses to do in order to make their leisure more interesting, more enjoyable and more personally satisfying.”
National Recreation Statement – Canada 1985

“Recreation is the experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing.”
Pathways to Wellbeing: Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015
LEISURE CAN BE:

• Active or Passive
• Alone or with others
• Indoor or Outdoor
• Participatory or Spectator
• Fee or Free
• Planned or Spontaneous
• Others?

For life balance; variety is recommended
BENEFITS OF LEISURE ARE (CAN BE):

- sense of belonging
- stress reduction
- creative expression
- exercise
- learning
- positive self-esteem
- social connection
- challenge
- reaching our potential

... endless!!

Note:
When people understand what they might benefit from an activity, (WIIFM) they are more likely to participate and maintain participation which yields even greater benefit — especially in terms of physical activity and enhanced health value.
BENEFITS HUB

• sense of belonging
• social and emotional wellbeing
• reduced stress
• creative expression
• leadership skills
• reduced health risks
• quality of life
• enhanced learning
• education performance
• confidence and self-esteem
• civic responsibility
SELF-AWARENESS ACTIVITIES

Help us to:

... understand who we are and what we need/want

... communicate more clearly with others regarding our needs/wants and challenges

... make informed decisions that reflect our own needs, interests and situations

... keep focused and motivated
Reflection is an important learning process.

It involves slowing down our thinking so that we can become more aware.

Personal reflection increases self-awareness enabling us to make more informed choices.
Think about something that you were doing in the last few months that you found satisfying or enjoyable.

Now focus on WHY (for what reason) you are feeling good/satisfied? Just one or two words.
Need

Drive

Means

End/Outcome
THE “WHY” NOT JUST “WHAT”

• Recreation and leisure are more than the activity (the what) – they have an impact
• Means to an end; not just the end
• Explain the 5 Why’s
• Outcomes orientation explains the value
• People becoming aware of their needs and finding activities that are accessible AND meet those needs
• Sponsors or taxpayers understand the value
ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE ....

“...recreation is a social service in the same way that health and education are considered as social services - recreation's purpose should be:

(a) to assist with individual & community development
(b) to improve the quality of life;
(c) to enhance social functioning.

National Recreation Statement - Canada
VALUE OF LEISURE EDUCATION

Personally, leisure education:

• Increases our self-awareness
• Helps us take control/responsibility for our leisure
• Enhances our leisure experiences through informed choices and increased options
• Assists in reducing/eliminating barriers
• Contributes to balanced lifestyle and resilience
• Supports best use of leisure time we DO have
VALUE OF LEISURE EDUCATION

For the agency and the community:

• empowers individuals to make positive leisure choices
• Increases awareness of the value (or potential value) of recreation which can increase demand (and motivation)
• yields benefits such as healthy individuals, social connection, reduction in crime, etc
• is a sustainable practice; people can do for themselves and leaves staff/resources available for those that need help most re age, ability, safety etc
• Other benefits?
COMPONENTS OF THE LEISURE EDUCATION PROCESS

Knowledge and Awareness of Leisure

Positive Attitudes Toward Leisure

Awareness of Resources for Leisure

Self Awareness, Interests, Needs & Constraints

Skills for Participation

Decision Making Knowledge and Skills

Values
LEISURE LITERACY ...

... is the outcome of leisure education; the presence of all 6 of these elements to ensure individuals are:

• aware of and value recreation and leisure
• equipped to make informed choices that lead to quality leisure experiences
• self-determining, self-sufficient, and proactive in relation to their leisure lives
LEISURE LITERACY

The outcome of the leisure learning process is leisure literacy; individuals, families and communities that value leisure, and are equipped to make informed choices that will enhance their health and quality of life.

The organizations that support leisure learning recognize the importance of enabling people for leisure beyond the provision of programs and facilities.
UNTIL TOMORROW ...

Recreation’s purpose is not to kill time, but to make life,
Not to keep a person occupied, but to keep them refreshed;
Not to offer an escape from life, but to provide a discovery of life-

-Author Unknown
EDUCATING FOR LEISURE: PERSONAL LEARNING AND DISCOVERY

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SESSION OUTCOMES

Today’s session should give you a chance to:

• become familiar with some tools for individual leisure education/coaching
• reflect on your own leisure and identify leisure needs, interests and assets
• try out a model for making leisure choices
• set a new leisure goal using a leisure education decision making model (choose with intention)
COMPONENTS OF THE LEISURE EDUCATION PROCESS

Knowledge and Awareness of Leisure
Positive Attitudes Toward Leisure
Awareness of Resources for Leisure
Self Awareness, Interests, Needs & Constraints
Skills for Participation
Decision Making Knowledge and Skills

VALUES
Reflection and Self-Awareness

A Self-Awareness Inventory Helps Us:

• Make more informed choices for personal health and quality of life
• Clearly communicate our needs/wants to others
• Be positive role models (family, students, friends)
• Share our assets with others
• Address potential constraints before they become barriers
• Keep focused to sustain our balance and energy
Decision Making Model for Leisure

- Interests
- Needs
- Resources
- Constraints

Values

Petersen, C (1991)
INTERESTS

• A good starting point
• Easily understood
• Often the carrot that draws people in
• Can be something that connects people
• By itself does not necessarily constitute a good activity choice

Resource: “Leisure Interest Inventory”
IDENTIFYING INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

• Each of us has hundreds of personal needs
• Needs can be met through school, work, play, relationships, and recreation/leisure
• Unmet needs motivate us to action
• Having needs may not mean we know what they are or can articulate them

Resource: “It’s Important to Me”
Choosing Activities to Meet Needs

- Need
- Drive
- Means
- End/Outcome
POSSIBLE CONSTRAINTS

• $, time, equipment, partner(s)
• Awareness of value, knowledge, skills
• Confidence, connections, access
• Secondary resources (transportation, babysitting...)

Note 1: Something that is an asset to one may be a constraint for another

Note 2: Perception IS reality

Resource: “Barriers to Your Enjoyment”
ASSETS AND RESOURCES

• Personal, Family, Agency, Government
• $, people, knowledge, equipment, facility
• Confidence, skills, access
• Others?

Resource: “On My Side”
Putting it all together

Use the decision making model and checklists:

1. Combine your personal information (needs, interests, assets, constraints) to assess your activity choice/goal
2. Discuss with someone else to reinforce goals
3. Use this process throughout life & changes
4. Not every activity choice requires this analysis

Resource: “Leisure Activity Planning Exercise”
Decision Making Model for Leisure

Values

Interests

Constraints

YOU

Needs

Resources

Values

Petersen, C (1991)
Finding Fun AND Fulfillment

❖ Be a participant in life, not a spectator – engage and be intentional
❖ No choice IS a choice – consequences
❖ Passion – do what you love
❖ Energy comes from knowing what you want
❖ Define yourself not by the past; but by the future and what you can become!
❖ Enjoy life – and you will be well
“Man does not cease to play because he grows old; man grows old because he ceases to play.” – George Bernard Shaw
EDUCATING FOR LEISURE: APPLICATIONS AND STRATEGIES

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SESSION OUTCOMES

• Apply a leisure education lens to your own setting to create organizational sample strategies
• Insight into integration of leisure literacy into programming and evaluation
• Awareness of target groups that are not engaged in recreation programs and services and discuss how we might facilitate their engagement in leisure of their choice
RECREATION, PARKS AND LEISURE:

- have the power to engage people in activities that contribute to their mental and physical health
- shape the physical and social environments in a community enabling healthy lifestyles
- are a social service providing upstream wellness activities, services and opportunities
- require promotion and education at an individual and community level to realize their full potential
The core business of public recreation falls into three categories:

1) creating awareness and building understanding about the power and potential of recreation,
2) provision of opportunities for people to engage in recreation
3) education and building leisure literacy that enables people to avail themselves of the opportunities.”

Recreation Nova Scotia; April 2013 (author Brenda Robertson)
COMPONENTS OF THE LEISURE EDUCATION PROCESS

Knowledge and Awareness of Leisure

Positive Attitudes Toward Leisure

Awareness of Resources for Leisure

Self Awareness, Interests, Needs & Constraints

Skills for Participation

Decision Making Knowledge and Skills

Values
The word literacy refers to learning that enables individuals to:

▪ achieve their goals
▪ develop their knowledge and potential
▪ participate fully in their community.

Leisure literacy therefore enables individuals (and communities) by teaching them how to plan for and use their leisure time.

In a world where we feel unable to control many things, we can have the power to make choices regarding recreation and leisure activities.
CHOOSING ACTIVITIES TO MEET NEEDS

Individual

Need

Drive

Means

Community

End/Outcome
MARKETING IDEAS TO EDUCATE AND ENGAGE

Slogans to educate (examples from Saskatchewan)

- Recreation: An Investment for Life!
- Sport: More than Fun and Games
- Culture Counts

Benefits to entice - beyond features of a program to the outcomes important to individual, family, community

Local resources to engage - places, programs, activities, things to do as a family or for free (Alberta)

- City of Edmonton – “Priceless Fun”
- Pincher Creek – destinations and activities

Other ideas?
ADVOCACY OR SPONSORSHIP

Educate elected leaders and decision makers of the value that CAN be delivered through recreation

Link needs of community or sponsor to the outcome that will be delivered

Encourage decisions are made based on the value or outcome not on the activity or program

Good investment (leisure education) as it creates sustainability
PROGRAMMING

Quality programming
  - Positive attitudes come from well planned and lead activities that meet needs

Integrate education into activities
  - Skill development and other applications (ie swim program and discuss acquasize, synchro, boating, other locations etc)
  - Help people to articulate what their needs are and what they want to get out of the program (social, music, exercise, skills, safety)

Teachable moments
  - Doesn’t even need to be planned; jump on opportunities to talk about interests, opportunities, overcoming barriers (confidence, babysitting, transportation etc)

Others?
OTHER WAYS TO INTEGRATE

Evaluation tools and processes
- Summer playgrounds

Surveys and Planning – educate as you ask

Community development

Facility design, signage etc

Special leisure education events
- Leap into Leisure – City of Edmonton
- Activate your park – NRPA or private

Staff training
- For their own health and professional development
- To develop educational opportunities for program participants

Others?
USE THE VALUE OF LEISURE EDUCATION TO SELL THE IDEA

Personally:

• Enhances our self-awareness
• Helps us take control of and responsibility for our leisure and health
• Enhances our leisure experiences through informed choices and increased options
• Assists in reducing/eliminating barriers
• Contributes to balanced lifestyle and resilience
• More able to participate as informed community members re recreation needs and wants
USE THE VALUE OF LEISURE EDUCATION TO SELL THE IDEA

For the Community:

- Empowers individuals to make leisure choices that are appropriate and personally satisfying (healthy individuals, reduction in crime, full participation etc)
- Sustainable practice; can do for themselves; leaves our time for those people and activities that need us
- Greater awareness of value means more participation, $, volunteer time, etc
- Others?
GROUP EXERCISE – FOUR PER GROUP

1. Around your target group or program/service brainstorm how you could educate about leisure.

2. Pick components you want to address such as awareness of value or participation skills and then how you will do this within your context.

3. If its less restricting just list possible ideas or teachable moments to educate for leisure
DEVELOPING YOUR STRATEGY

Ultimately - we have learned that you need leadership, projects and eventually an overall integrated plan.

Start somewhere – depends upon you whether you develop a comprehensive plan or one activity.

Think Big – start small.

Use all of your people resources to generate ideas and develop ownership for educating others.

Celebrate progress and success.

Getting there is half the fun – enjoy the journey!
LEISURE EDUCATION: SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

C. Petersen; Educating for Leisure (unpublished) 1991
The National Framework FOR Recreation in Canada (created in 2015) provides leadership by setting out a vision, values, 5 goal areas and priority actions within each goal. Access at cpra.ca

1. Foster Active Living through physical recreation
2. Increase inclusion and access to recreation for populations that face constraints to participation
3. Help people connect to nature through recreation
4. Ensure the provision of supportive physical and social environments that encourage participation in recreation and build strong, caring communities
5. Ensure the continued capacity, growth and sustainability of the field
POSSIBLE ROLES

• Be an educator as well as a provider
• Be a positive role model for others
• Promote the benefits of recreation and leisure to individuals, community, partners, sponsors
• Facilitate a wide range of leisure opportunities
• Foster positive attitudes through meaningful choices
• Seize teachable moments
ROLES (CONT’D)

• Inform others of the resources available to them
• Recognize learning should occur across the lifecycle (all ages)
• Encourage self-awareness and reflection
• Support access and inclusion to engage all
• Celebrate progress
• Others?
LEISURE EDUCATION: CORE COMPETENCY FOR RECREATION PRACTITIONERS

Recommended that recreation practitioners entering the field should have the knowledge and skills to:

Contribute to the capacity of individuals and community stakeholders to make meaningful decisions about the use of leisure time

Source: B. Herchmer (2008) for ARPA
LEISURE EDUCATION: A CORE COMPETENCY

✓ Demonstrate an awareness of historical and emerging philosophies and theories of recreation, play and leisure
✓ Articulate a personal philosophy of leisure
✓ Explain the personal, social, economic and environmental benefits of recreation
✓ Facilitate an understanding of the value of leisure and recreation as part of a healthy lifestyle
✓ Seek out opportunities for integrating and facilitating leisure education messages
✓ Contribute to an environment that promotes the importance of leisure
LEISURE EDUCATION: A CORE COMPETENCY

✓ Facilitate an understanding of the barriers/constraints to leisure participation and develop strategies for positive change and inclusion

✓ Promote relevant physical, affective, social, and cognitive components of various recreation activities as they relate to personal growth and development, lifelong learning and a healthy lifestyle

✓ Plan and deliver effective leisure education presentations

✓ Promote an awareness of available recreation opportunities

✓ Apply basic counselling and referral techniques

✓ Contribute to the education of caregivers regarding an understanding of developmentally appropriate recreation activities

✓ Promote the importance of spaces and places for creative, imaginative, structured and unstructured play and recreation
LEISURE EDUCATION RESOURCES

- Pathways to Wellbeing – cpra.ca
- Provincial/Territorial Associations
- benefitshub.ca
- campusforcommunities.ca
- Recreation Canada Newspaper
- Universities and colleges
- Others?
benefitshub.ca – free and searchable
- a national database of over 750 studies that demonstrate the value of recreation, active living, sports, fitness, arts, culture and parks

lin.ca (leisure information network)
- No longer in service

Others? Please share your favourite places
MOVING FORWARD

Look after yourself; we need healthy, energetic leaders to support this whole movement

Be intentional; develop a practice or perhaps even a policy re leisure education within your agency

Think big; start small – this is a lens and doesn’t need to be an additional task!

Be a leader within your department and community

Have fun; the feeling is contagious!