

The benefits of movement and getting outdoors on communication and social interaction

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Short Abstract

In this paper, Melinda and Laurence, adults with disabilities, reflect on the benefits that adopting an active lifestyle has had on their communication and perceived social connectedness. They will share their personal stories and experiences on the positive benefits to speech, movements and postures needed for gestural and aided communication, pain management and overall energy levels. They will also explore the social connections they make by getting outside, in nature and in their local communities and the benefits this has for them personally but for the development of inclusion in our society.

Together with Melissa, speech pathologist, and Viki, physiotherapist, the importance of supporting development of healthy movements and lifestyles for people with physical disabilities, will be explored.

Long Abstract

There is much research and literature telling us about the positive impacts of physical movement and access to green spaces on people's wellbeing^{1,2,4}. Transversely, the negative impacts of a sedentary lifestyle on people's mental health and physical wellbeing, is talked about often in mainstream media. People with disabilities often have reduced opportunity for physical activity³, and this can impact their overall physical health and wellbeing. This includes cardiovascular health, musculoskeletal health, mental health and social connectedness.

The impacts of reduced physical activity for people with physical disabilities can affect many aspects of their life. Reduction in movement opportunities, extended periods of time spent using limited patterns of movement, and musculoskeletal changes can have long term, and life limiting effects on communication, social connectedness, physical health and overall wellbeing. Supporting people with disabilities, at all ages, to engage in physical activity should be encouraged. Helping individuals' problem solve physical and communication access to sport and outdoor recreational activities can support a person to meet a range of their goals.

In this paper, Melinda and Laurence, adults with disabilities, reflect on the benefits that adopting an active lifestyle has had on their communication and perceived social connectedness. They will share their personal stories and experiences on the positive benefits to speech, movements and postures needed for gestural and aided communication, pain management and overall energy levels. They will also explore the social connections they make

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