



Center for Excellence in
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Immigrant & Refugee Family Wellness Through Yoga & Zumba

Liz Crawford, Faith Swenson, Angela Serrani, Kathleen Cassidy, and Brittany Roy

Departments of Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Public Health

University of New England, Portland ME



Introduction:

Refugee and immigrant families resettling in America are presented with a variety of challenges affecting many areas of human occupation (sleep, work, education, play, leisure and social participation).

Purpose:

The purpose of this study was to implement a preliminary series of yoga and zumba classes at the Riverton Housing Community in order to identify the participants' exercise-based priority health goals and commitment levels for ongoing classes.

Method:

An interprofessional team of five graduate students collaborated with three community health outreach workers (CHOWs) in order to effectively plan and implement a 4 week preliminary program of yoga and zumba where mothers and children attended sessions for one hour, once a week for four weeks. Mothers attended yoga the first half of class, while children learned zumba; then they would switch and children engaged in yoga, while mothers learned zumba. The three CHOWs (Arabic, French and Somali speaking) assisted in translating flyers to advertise class time and location, along with educational flyers about the benefits of yoga and zumba. Outreach occurred through dissemination of printed materials and word of mouth by CHOWs and between community members.



Figure 1: OT and PT graduate students pictured with the Community Health Outreach Workers (CHOWs)



Figure 2: Example of printed materials given to participants

Results & Discussion:

A strong commitment level to participate in consistent yoga and/or zumba class was observed at Riverton, as suggested by the growth in participation, from 5 students at the first class, to 24 students (combined mothers and children). Adult participants reported temporarily feeling less pain in their shoulders at the end of each yoga session.

Priority health goals identified among participants:

- Increase frequency of weekly exercise
- Increase muscle tone and achieve a decreased level of pain commonly felt in shoulders and lower back areas of adult participants.



Figure 3: Image from the mothers yoga class



Figure 4: OT students with children after zumba class.

Moving Forward:

In summary, these results indicate that mothers and children at Riverton are highly interested and committed in attending regular yoga and/or zumba classes. Future implementation of consistent classes is recommended.

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