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Kelly Carr

Department of Kinesiology, University of Windsor, Windsor, ON, carrk@uwindsor.ca

Rosario Colomba

Xanadu Health Club, Lakeshore, ON, rcolomba21@gmail.com

Sean Horton

Department of Kinesiology, University of Windsor, Windsor, ON, hortons@uwindsor.ca

Chad A. Sutherland

Department of Kinesiology, University of Windsor, Windsor, ON, chads@uwindsor.ca

Nadia R. Azar

Department of Kinesiology, University of Windsor, Windsor, ON, azar5@uwindsor.ca

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Stimulating social change: Engaging people with multiple sclerosis through a community-based exercise program

Kelly Carr¹, Rosario Colomba², Sean Horton¹, Chad A. Sutherland¹, Nadia R. Azar¹

¹Adapted Physical Exercise (APEX) Research Group, Department of Kinesiology, University of Windsor, Windsor, ON, Canada

²Xanadu Health Club, Lakeshore, ON, Canada

We examined the transformative impact of experiencing a community-based exercise program for people with MS. Situated within critical disability theory and Giddens' (1984) framework of social change, we offer a thematic analysis of interview data collected from individuals who witnessed adapted exercise programming. Participants identified an alteration to their (1) assumptions of disability, (2) self-evaluations related to personal abilities, knowledge, and positive affect, and (3) perceptions of the fitness industry. We conclude that community-based exercise programs allow individuals with impairment to act in ways that challenge disabling social constraints, thus eliciting a form of transformation that may stimulate social change.