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Aisling: Hello, my name is Aisling McGrath. I'm a researcher from the Southeast Technological University in Ireland and I'm based in the School of Health Sciences. And I'm going to talk to you for a couple of minutes today about measuring wellbeing in your physical activity initiatives in the community setting. My research focus will have looked specifically at community-based initiatives and how we can evaluate and capture outcomes that look at wellbeing and that also have a physical activity component to them.

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Aisling: So the first thing is why do we measure wellbeing in the first place? And it's important for us to be able to demonstrate that within our physical activity initiatives, because we know that physical activity has so much more to offer than just increasing physical health and physical health benefits. It can enhance our sense of purpose, our sense of belonging, enhance our social support, our self efficacy and our mental wellbeing too. So it's really important that we capture that. And we also want to be able to demonstrate that our initiatives are effective, that they work, that they're efficient, so we can use our resources to have a positive impact. And that we can demonstrate that they do have an impact. And sometimes as practitioners, we might be a bit concerned about doing that in terms of do we have the time, but also will it have an impact on wellbeing when physical activity is a primary focus? And the thing to consider is that people enhance wellbeing at different levels. So if people have lower wellbeing, they may make smaller, more subtle changes because there's multiple factors impacting wellbeing and they might be more serious and they might be more complex. But the small subtle changes are still so important for us to be able to capture and demonstrate as well.

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Aisling: Something that we need to ask ourselves then is choosing what to measure and how. And a tip that I would give you there is knowing your target audience is so important. So who are your group? What motivates them? Why are they participating in this physical activity initiative? Maybe your physical activity is not actually your primary focus. Maybe it's a secondary focus and you might be looking at increasing happiness or social support, but understanding what you want to capture. So looking at your aims and objectives, what is the goal of your physical activity initiative? Physical activity enhancement maybe one, but also what are you looking to measure in terms of wellbeing and what does your group need? So anything that can be co-produced, working with them to design your initiative and understanding what they value in terms of their own wellbeing is even more important again. So if you can do that at all, I would recommend that. But again, it can be really challenging in terms of, what do we measure? So if you're just starting out, I recommend these measures, the ONS4 - the Office of National Statistics. You're looking at four variables, so around life satisfaction, how satisfied you feel with your life, your life worth, so how worthwhile life is to you, your happiness, your sense of happiness, and then anxiety. So the levels of anxiety. And all of these are single item measures and they're on a scale of 0 to 10. So zero is not at all and ten is completely. So, for example, overall, how satisfied are you at life nowadays? Zero is not at all and ten is I'm completely satisfied. These work really well because they're valid. So they've been tested, so they're reliable and they're sensitive in that they can capture change. So you can use them to be able to demonstrate the impact of your initiative and you know that they're reliable so you can have confidence in these. But also there are more standardised measures now. So other initiatives and other evaluations have used these. So if you're interested in comparing your initiative to other initiatives or to other populations then this is something that will work really well. So the Office of National Statistics Personal Wellbeing.

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Aisling: So I would recommend if you're using the ONS in particular, a survey works really well or a questionnaire. And again, keep it succinct, keep it easy for yourself in terms of being able to capture it, that it's timely, but also that it's easy for your participants to understand. So consider health literacy and don't make it an arduous process and that you've got lots of different things that you're trying to capture and that it will be tedious for your participants to work through. Sometimes what you can do, depending on your group, they might want to complete the questionnaire for themselves. Other times you can maybe weave it into conversation so that it does seem a little bit less arduous again. So maybe if your physical activity initiative, for example, included a walking group, when you're out walking with your group, you might be able to collect the data in terms of having a conversation with the individuals in that group. So talking to one of your participants and saying "Well, how satisfied are you at life at the moment if zero is not at all, and ten is completely?" So try and normalise it as best you can, and that makes it easier for you. And it also can help in terms of building relationships. So before you try to maybe capture those, I would recommend spending some time building a little bit of trust and building some rapport with your group. And in terms of then analysing it, try and capture it a baseline before you deliver any type of physical activity and then captured again towards the end so that you can compare what we call pre and post. And even a percentage change might be something that's important to demonstrate. But if you can do any kind of statistical analysis in order to be in order to be able to demonstrate that the significant changes that's even better again.

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Aisling: What you want to do is disseminate your findings, spread the word as far and wide as you can, and consider different communication channels to do this. And what I mean by that is that, again, knowing who you want to target in terms of getting this information across, what kind of medium will they use to process that information? So maybe it's a report for your funders. Maybe it's an infographic and something that's easy to absorb for your participants. Maybe you want to do some academic work. Or maybe you want to promote your message on social media. Maybe you want to demonstrate that it's cost effective. So consider those things but also don't forget the most important audience, and that's the people who actually participated. And that in itself will enhance wellbeing because it gives them a sense of ownership and a sense of reward. So sometimes it's the process, how we do what we do and not just what we're delivering that can be just as important. So just to bear that in mind. You may have different ideas in terms of what it is that you're specifically looking at. And what I would recommend you do then is that you tailor your approach, but do it with validated measures so that you know that they're reliable and that they can capture that impact that you want to capture. You might be looking at loneliness or something like "the UCLA Loneliness Scale" could work pretty well. Maybe it's self-efficacy, it might be mental wellbeing. So something like the "Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale" or self-esteem and you could look at the "Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale," maybe you're interested in demonstrating cost impact and then you could use a different type of measure again.

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Aisling: What I would recommend is this really good resource called "What Works Wellbeing". And this is a website. It's UK based. This group's focus is on enhancing research and evaluation in terms of capturing the impact of initiatives that have a wellbeing focus. So through this website you can look at what it is that you want to measure, but also you can develop your own survey. And it's really operational, it's really useful and



the website is there. And you can also feel free to contact me if you have any questions. And best of luck in capturing wellbeing in your community-based physical activity.