

Transcript

MODULE 5: Topic 3- Quick overview from experts

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Niamh Murphy: Just by way of introduction, this is a definition of social disadvantage from the WHO And you can see from this definition that it is all encompassing. So straight away we can see what a difficult area this is to try and capture in just a few minutes, because we're talking here about all aspects of social disadvantage that might be geographical disadvantage, sociocultural disadvantage, and including age and disability.

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Niamh Murphy: And just to let you know a little bit about me, my background is my day job as a professor in physical activity and public health. I'm also an active coach. I am very involved in the sport of athletics and in my work. I have done some work with the World Health Organization where we produced this piece of work, which is physical activity promotion in socially disadvantaged groups, and it's about principles for action. And this is published in many different languages and you can get it on the WHO website.

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Niamh Murphy: And I'm sure many of you have seen these kinds of cartoons before or these sorts of images where it looks at that not everybody has equal access to sport or physical activity opportunities, and it's not enough to give the same access to everybody and expect them to be able to access it equally.

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Paolo Adami: And specifically, on the topic of socially disadvantaged groups, we know that this is an extremely relevant topic worldwide. It does not affect only one country, one specific city, one specific region, but it's really a worldwide issue. There are many different reasons why groups might be disadvantaged. As we know this could be because of a particular socio-economic background or challenges that that group might face in that specific city or in that specific country. We know that there might be reasons connected to the age, for example, so we might have different age groups that face different challenges in being physically active, and that puts them at a disadvantage level compared to others. We also know that there might be some ethnicity or minority challenges, so specific minority or groups in a specific country or in a specific location might face some additional challenges compared to the rest of the general population. That's another big important aspect. And then another group, and it somehow it's probably closer to what I do as a physician, is those that have a long term or chronic condition, medical condition that do add an extra layer of challenges in getting them physically active because of the condition disability or the noncommunicable diseases they might have. So there are different many different reasons for that.

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Viv Holt: So what I'm going to share with you is what I've learned from working in over 70 countries around the world. And some of the key challenges and potential solutions tend to be the same wherever you go. I'm talking about disadvantaged young people, but I think a lot of what I see in terms of challenges and solutions could be applied in different contexts to different age groups. So the first challenge I would like to look at is what I call the hard challenges. And they're the they're the ones in a country or region that are your infrastructure, the geography, urbanised. Could we go back one place? Can we go? Thank you. Geography, the economics or the transport. And these are not necessarily ones that we can influence

because they're part of a much greater challenge. But we need to be aware of them when we are working with any socially disadvantaged group of people.

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Viv Holt: The key challenges, which I call the soft challenges, ones that we are more likely to be able to influence. And I was listening to what Paolo said about in terms of different groups and ages. Some of the key challenges for me that are soft tend to be repeated. They could be culture, so it might not be culturally normal for some people to engage in physical activity. It could be identity, a group identity or a personal identity. When it comes to skills, very often socially disadvantaged people lack confidence and they may have a lack of skills or even a perceived lack of skills. Their experience of an activity or how it's being delivered and a very one we see very often is language and our ability to communicate and engage with people. And these are the ones that we tend to focus on more.

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Niamh Murphy: This really needs to be our starting point. And you can see here some of the great work that has been happening around Europe. You can see in the middle they're creating a level playing field, which is particularly focusing on social inclusion of migrants and ethnic minorities in sport. And ISCA has been involved with many of these projects throughout Europe. And we're going to hear a bit more about some of this work from colleagues later. And as a lot of this work has focused on the core principles for getting people involved and in a way that's really health enhancing for them. And this is one piece of work here, the MOVE Guiding principles, again I'd urge you to go and look at some of these because there really is quite a wealth of knowledge out there already on this, but from my perspective, just to focus in from my perspective on some of the work that I've done with the WHO, the fact that there's a significant level of activity is really, really great. But the how is all important. It's not just about principles, but it's about trying to enact those principles. And we do see that there are some really good ideas that are some good practice that has been going on multi agency partnerships and use of peers and local people as delivery agents. But there are other things that are maybe not so good and the amount of engagement, for example, or the quality of the engagement with target groups beforehand.

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Viv Holt: Solutions. Well, we all know the solution we need is systemic change at a strategic level. And there are quite a number of challenges even within that, because as Paolo mentioned, you can have a constantly changing population and profile. You could get a number of displaced people and families coming in and perhaps a younger population or young people leaving an area and you're left with an older generation. So often the profiles are constantly changing, so making strategic decisions are quite difficult and we all know whatever country you work in, there are economic pressures, recession, competing priorities. So working with socially disadvantaged groups may not be a priority. Agency and organisation disconnection is a big one, and this is one where sometimes I think we can contribute to systemic change by linking with community people, linking health to sport, to education, and then engaging in a wider network of provision for socially disadvantaged people. And the last slide, please.

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Vivi Holt: So what have I learnt? Working with coaches, volunteers and practitioners is you've got to raise your own awareness level of what it means to be socially disadvantaged, and that's a really big umbrella term that can involve lots of different things that some of which we've talked about, others that you will know yourself.

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Viv Holt: And also think about perception. I often talk to people who look at socially disadvantaged groups as victims. It's not their fault. And actually we've got to challenge our perception of that and challenge our unconscious bias, which may affect what we're doing.

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Viv Holt: The second one for me is the biggest possible solution. How often do we make funding bids to organisations and bring groups of people together to put forward proposals, write plans, design projects and then pilot them without ever involving the young people or the socially disadvantaged group in the design or the development of that project involving them in terms of where, how, why and when they want it. So a solution for me is involve people that are socially disadvantaged. You'll get more buy in.

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Viv Holt: And the final one for me is think about work as a sport development activity. What else do these people who are socially disadvantaged need in order to engage them in whatever you are doing? How can we thread through what we're offering opportunities for teamwork, opportunities for them to feel they belong and communicate with them through question, through answer, through reflection. All of these things will help to engage more.

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Niamh Murphy: I really think we need in this space to think more deeply about the work we do. This is just a quote from The Lancet, one of the best medical journals in the world a few years ago. And in this piece of work, which was focusing on particularly physical activity promotion, they talked about not reinventing the wheel, that more of the same is not enough. We're not managing to reduce the inequalities. The disparities are inequalities in physical activity across the world. And we have to start asking ourselves the question, is it something about the way that we are actually promoting physical activity with and for these groups?

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Niamh Murphy: So I want you to start with what I think is a really wonderful book by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett, which is called The Spirit Level. And this focuses on how equality is better for everyone. And on the right-hand side, you see the income gap in many different countries within the EU. And what we see over and over again is that equality is better for everyone. It's particularly good for those at the lower end of the socio-economic divide, but it is great for everybody.

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Viv Holt: Absolutely engage the very people that you want to reach in the whole process from development, design to implementation. Make them feel part of the project rather than giving it to them when you have thought of an idea. If we involve them, if they feel it's about them and for them, they're more likely to engage.

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Paolo Adami: I fully agree with you. And what really strikes me is that we know that access to HEPA for socially disadvantaged group, it's a global issue. Still the solution, is very much local and the knowledge of that group in what their needs are, it's fundamental. So as we've said, they need to be engaged from the very beginning. They know what their peers need, they know what they're looking for, and that's where the solution lies. So they really need to be involved and share the objective with those that are designing the project. I think this is the key message from me.