

AN INTRODUCTION TO LEISURE EDUCATION AND LEISURE LITERACY

Table of Contents

What is Leisure Education? Leisure Literacy?	2
The Benefits (Outcomes) of Leisure Education for the Individual, Agency/Department, and Community .	3
Whose Role is it to Educate for Leisure?	4
Leisure: the Power of Choice	4
Consequences/Outcomes and Relative Value of Leisure Choices	5
Core Concepts in Leisure Education	5
Key Components in a Leisure Education Process	5
Defining Recreation and Leisure	6
Scope of Leisure	6
Benefits of Leisure	6
Your Role as a Leisure Educator/Leader	7
Implementing Leisure Education	8
Leisure Education “Quick Start” Worksheet	9
A Comprehensive Approach to Leisure Education	9
Sample Activities.....	10
Leisure Interest Inventory Exercise	10
Facilitation Notes	10
Leisure Interest Inventory – Adults	11
It’s Important to Me	16
Facilitation Notes	16
It’s Important to Me	17
Leisure Activity Planning Exercise	18
Facilitation Notes	18
Leisure Activity Planning Sheet	19
Discovering the Possibilities or Alphabet Challenge	21
Facilitation Notes	21
Discovering the Possibilities – Alphabet Challenge	23
On My Side: A Leisure Assets Inventory	24
Facilitation Notes	24
On My Side: A Leisure Assets Inventory	25

AN INTRODUCTION TO LEISURE EDUCATION AND LEISURE LITERACY

The following is an introduction to leisure education and leisure literacy. The purpose is to share concepts and tools that can be used in individual lifestyle coaching and also to integrate into recreation service delivery. Leisure education broadens awareness of leisure, equips people to make more informed leisure choices, and increases ability to access opportunities.

What is Leisure Education? Leisure Literacy?

Appropriate leisure choices can contribute significantly to our personal and community well-being, therefore having the capacity to make informed leisure choices becomes critical.

Leisure education is a process where people become aware of and value leisure, and can create or access a variety of leisure opportunities to meet their individual needs. There are a number of components in a leisure education process ranging from increased awareness and positive attitudes, to resources, skills, planning and decision making. With leisure being very personal, there is a strong focus on self-awareness to ensure that decisions are satisfying and relevant for the individual.

Leisure education is a sustainable practice, equipping individuals to plan for and, create or access activities that are both satisfying and appropriate. The outcome of this leisure learning process is leisure literacy: self-determining, self-sufficient, and proactive individuals, families and communities that value leisure, and are equipped to make informed choices for quality leisure experiences that enhance their health and quality of life.

The concept of leisure education is not new although application in mainstream recreation service delivery has been limited. This may be due to a lack of awareness of the leisure education process, a shortage of concrete definitions and tools or no will on the part of public recreation institutions. In the late seventies and through the eighties there was a growing body of knowledge and resources being developed by public sector to educate for leisure. The investment in this important role seemed to drop off in the nineties perhaps due to economic times or leadership priorities, but what is clearly missing is the recognition of the value of this investment in the development of a healthy society.

“Traditionally, the field has tended to put its greatest effort into the provision of opportunities, paying less attention to who was participating (or not) and to why that might be the case..... We can build pools, parks, and playgrounds and develop a menu of programs, all well lead and managed, but if the people who can benefit the most do not understand the benefits of participating, or are systemically excluded from doing so, the opportunities are not actually accessible to them. (Recreation Nova Scotia; Response Paper 2013)

The Benefits (Outcomes) of Leisure Education for the Individual, Agency/Department, and Community

Leisure education is important for individuals of all ages because it:

1. Introduces us to potential activities and resources broadening our leisure choices
2. Enhances our ability to make informed leisure choices
3. Helps us take control of (and responsibility for) our leisure
4. Increases our leisure options and enjoyment
5. Assists in reducing/eliminating barriers to leisure by learning to mitigate constraints
6. Increases self-awareness which is also valuable in all personal decision making
7. Contributes to balanced lifestyle therefore reducing possible negative outcomes

As potential providers, a recreation agency or department can benefit from educating for leisure in the following ways:

1. Staff are more aware of their leisure values and take responsibility for their well-being.
2. Staff model healthy balanced lifestyles and promote a healthy organizational image.
3. There is potential to increase target market (demand) by educating “non-users” of the value of leisure, how they might benefit from participating and how they can get involved.
4. Staff are better equipped to meet mandates of providing leisure opportunities for all, by reducing barriers and encouraging participation.
5. Citizens/consumers will be more able to take responsibility for their leisure taking the burden off of providers so that they can concentrate on others that need support.
6. Resources are optimized as the organization is making the best use of time and resources.
7. Creative methods of service delivery are discovered by reaching beyond current methods.
8. An enhanced profile (public and political) is built as others learn about the importance of recreation services. An enhanced profile can contribute to:
 - a. Community advocating for recreation/leisure services,
 - b. Increased funding opportunities,
 - c. New sponsorships/partnerships,
 - d. Higher profile within government.

And ultimately a community benefits from leisure education because it:

1. Empowers individuals to make positive leisure choices that contribute to healthy individuals, stronger communities, reduction in crime, etc.
2. Is a sustainable practice as capacity is created for people to do for themselves.
3. Provides access to leisure which itself has endless benefits from emotional well-being to confidence, self-esteem and most importantly fun and enjoyment.
4. Teaches people how to make intentional activity selection so we are less likely to fall into negative habits/activities.
5. Helps organizations to make better community level leisure choices as citizens are informed and can articulate the services and supports most beneficial to them.

Whose Role is it to Educate for Leisure?

“Perhaps the least understood yet most important aspect of the public recreation agenda is the need for leisure literacy and the function of leisure education. Leisure education is the means through which individuals acquire the knowledge and skills to engage in recreation. Leisure literacy is the level of proficiency an individual possesses in a range of skills but also the possession of information that empowers a person to make informed decisions about the use of free time.

Guided by the core beliefs, public recreation has a primary role in providing and enabling education to enhance leisure literacy levels in order that individuals can actually participate in a broad range of recreation opportunities. Literacy not only includes proficiency, but also interest, confidence, entitlement, and the ability to create or access recreation opportunities. Although there is a key role to play in providing leisure education, it is equally important that public recreation lead in collaborating with schools, social service providers, and a host of other groups who work with specific target populations considered most in need of leisure education and literacy development.”

(Recreation Nova Scotia; Response Paper, 2013)

Leisure: the Power of Choice

Mainstream definitions of leisure generally focus on free time or time unoccupied by work or commitment. For the purpose of educating for leisure we support leisure as the use of free time for enjoyment (Oxford Dictionary). This definition implies the use of time for an activity/pursuit which results in a positive experience and a feeling of satisfaction. The satisfaction experienced through leisure comes from meeting personal needs such as relaxation, creative expression, challenge, learning a new activity and more!

The often forgotten yet essential element of leisure is that of choice. Through choice people have the power to control their leisure, and activities are usually selected for the perceived satisfaction or enjoyment that will come out of the activity. The pursuits chosen also help to define who we are and who we can become. It sets us apart from others by the unique combination of leisure experiences and helps us to find balance, sense of self and sense of belonging. Selecting activities that are personally satisfying increases the likelihood of regular participation, which is especially important for physical pursuits where we reap the greatest benefit from longer term engagement.

Having the freedom to make leisure choices does not necessarily mean that people have the knowledge, skills or drive to do so. This is the vital role of leisure education, preparing them with the attitudes, knowledge and tools to assess their individual leisure needs and plan for activities that satisfy and shape their leisure identity. Having this capacity is extremely important as we adjust to changing conditions in our lives as it enhances our ability to adjust our activities to the circumstance, making us more resilient.



Consequences/Outcomes and Relative Value of Leisure Choices

Not all leisure activities produce the same value or outcome. It is beneficial to describe the higher yield concept to others without placing prescriptive value for one activity over another. Generally speaking though, higher investment of energy and commitment yields more valuable outcomes. Research has shown that “high yield” activities produce more meaningful experiences and contribute positively to health and development. The “high yield” activities tend to be self-determined (i.e., participant has control) and are linked with taking initiative. This is important because when initiative is taken, we are motivated to engage in activities, will maintain interest and are not looking to others to provide direction; we take responsibility for our leisure time. High yield activities are associated with feelings of happiness, accomplishment, satisfaction, and competence.

On the other hand, there are “low yield” activities that require little investment of energy, commitment and initiative, such as TV viewing, sedentary activities, and being a spectator. These can produce feelings of indifference, lack of motivation, lack of interest, and boredom, especially over longer periods of time.

Core Concepts in Leisure Education

Leisure education is a lifelong journey. Below are some key concepts that will help you to support leisure learning. All of these are very brief explanations; there are a few suggested resources at the end of this section if you would like more information.

Key Components in a Leisure Education Process

The core components of a leisure learning process may be labelled slightly different by authors however the intent is much the same from Israel to Canada and from care settings to schools. For the purpose of this site, they are presented as six components starting with the most fundamental yet basic to the more complex and individual.

1. Knowledge and Awareness of Leisure
2. Positive Attitudes Toward Leisure
3. Awareness of Resources for Leisure
4. Self-Awareness: Interests, Assets, Needs, Constraints, Values
5. Skills for Participation in Leisure Activity
6. Decision Making Knowledge and Skills

Defining Recreation and Leisure

Leisure can be defined in thousands of different ways since it is a personal concept. The common elements in most definitions are time, activity and choice. To help promote a broad understanding of leisure there are a bank of activities included with this brief introduction. The following may also help to define/discuss what leisure is, or can be!

- Often related to time
- Personal and individual
- Satisfying
- Our choice
- An end in itself
- A means to an end
- Learned or re-learned

Scope of Leisure

Talk about the characteristics and activities that define leisure. They can be quite opposite and yet provide similar benefits to the participant. Leisure can be:

- Active or passive
- Alone or with others
- Indoor or outdoor
- Winter or summer
- Participatory or spectator
- Fee or free
- Planned or spontaneous

Benefits of Leisure

The benefits of leisure are endless and become both the motivation to participate and the end result of engaging in leisure activities. The www.benefitshub.ca is an extensive databank that outlines the many benefits of leisure and documents the evidence with over 800 pieces of research that support such benefits as:

- Sense of belonging
- Social and emotional wellbeing
- Reduced stress
- Creative expression
- Leadership skills
- Reduced health risks
- Quality of life
- Enhanced learning
- Education performance
- Confidence and self-esteem
- Civic responsibility

Your Role as a Leisure Educator/Leader

- Be a role model and advocate.
- Facilitate a wide range of opportunities for leisure learning through programs, facilities, special events and communications.
- Guide decision making especially toward “high yield” activities.
- Foster positive attitudes through age appropriate and meaningful choices.
- Facilitate opportunities/teachable moments.
- Emphasize importance of choice and the consequences.
- Recognize that learning occurs across the lifecycle.
- Encourage self-awareness and reflection.
- Celebrate progress.

Implementing Leisure Education

Educating for leisure is not defined by a classroom or a specific institution. Leisure learning is a process that can be fostered through family, community, educators or employers – a shared responsibility. It is the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes that will support decision making for positive leisure.

Public recreation agencies should play a lead role in providing leisure education and in collaborating with schools, social service agencies and other organizations, especially those that work with populations seen as most needing leisure education and leisure literacy. Provincially, government and NGO's can provide access to leisure education through public policy and resource development and locally, departments and agencies can provide training and implementation of leisure education strategies.

Historically leisure education processes have supported individuals or small group learning. The focus has been on clinical or institutional settings and is often part of a therapeutic intervention. In some cases where proactive, recreation leaders have found ways to offer leisure education to enhance self-responsibility and resilience around lifestyle choices (i.e., employee assistance, workplace wellness and some social/recreation programs). These targeted interventions are a good beginning, but how can we educate for leisure in ways that will benefit mainstream or general public not just target groups?

The “quick start” approach is to integrate leisure education into existing programs and services (see worksheet below). This will provide opportunities to apply the concepts and learn from these smaller scale interventions. Success with this ad hoc approach can help to inform a more comprehensive approach as described below.

Recreation agencies can provide leisure education by integrating learning into existing services. The “quick start” approach can be used in most any functional area within a recreation service delivery system. Categories for integration of leisure education include:

- Information and Referral Services
- Marketing and Promotions
- Programs and Special Events
- Community Initiatives
- Facility Operation
- Parks and Open Space
- Human Resources
- Policy Development
- Surveys and Assessment
- Outreach through Other Agencies
- Personal Consultations/Counselling

Leisure Education “Quick Start” Worksheet

Leisure Education “Quick Start” Worksheet			
Instructions: Pick a program or service that is currently provided by your agency and reflect on how the existing structure might be enhanced through leisure learning. The program intent should not be impacted, however, the outcomes may be enhanced as the “participant” will be more informed regarding their leisure. How could you educate for leisure through your program/service?			
Name of program/service:			
Within this program/service are there opportunities for people to:	Yes	No	Suggested Action
1. Assess their leisure needs? Interests?			
2. Explore barriers/constraints to leisure?			
3. Become more aware of the benefits of this activity?			
4. Enhance awareness of other leisure activities?			
5. Develop positive attitudes about leisure?			
6. Explore or try out new experiences?			
7. Move from this environment to an alternate environment to continue this activity?			
8. Find resources re leisure pursuits (information, equipment, etc.)?			
9. Take responsibility for their leisure?			
10. Make plans for their next leisure pursuit?			

A Comprehensive Approach to Leisure Education

Broader access to leisure learning can provide significant paybacks to society by helping people find and engage in pursuits that are meaningful and appropriate. As mentioned earlier, leisure learning is a shared responsibility; individual, family, school, workplace and through media, internet and others.

A comprehensive leisure education strategy that intentionally addresses all leisure education components should be the goal for recreation agencies. This will involve research and strategic initiatives to reach all demographics. Engaging partners to reach populations that do not have the knowledge or resources to access recreation on their own will be foundational to success. A comprehensive leisure education strategy or policy will go beyond traditional services, offering specific tools, sites, and new ways of supporting self-responsibility for individual and community leisure.

Within a strategy there will be numerous interventions working with individuals and groups. The following are a few samples of learning activities that can be completed by an individual, family or group to assess interests, needs, resources and to plan for new activities. Because leisure education is not entirely new, many ideas are resurfacing in digital form. There are hundreds of activities that can be used to help people plan for, and participate in, meaningful, healthy leisure.



Sample Activities

Leisure Interest Inventory Exercise

Target Age Group: Adults

Amount of Time: 20 minutes to an hour depending upon debrief/applications

Facilitation Notes

Purpose

This inventory/checklist is meant to broaden awareness of leisure and the many possible activities. This exercise will help identify individual areas of INTEREST.

This inventory can be printed so that you can complete it yourself or with a friend or partner to do some leisure planning together. You may want to start a leisure file so that this information is easily accessible when you want to reassess your leisure, try something new OR have conversations with family or friends about possible group activities.

Instructions

It is important to remember that you do NOT have to know how to do these activities, NOR do you need to have the equipment, skill or any fees required to participate – this is about INTEREST. The idea is to check off anything that you may have an interest in.

There may be activities listed that you are unfamiliar with. Use this opportunity to expand your knowledge around these possible leisure activities by discussing with others or do some research to find out more about these activities.

Once you have completed your inventory/checklist, reflect on what you have learned from this exercise and how the information might be useful for you. Discussing it with others will provide added value. You can talk about why they are of interest, or what your top five might be or what interests you might have in common with a friend or family member so that you can plan for the activity together.

Used alone, this activity can broaden awareness of how many possibilities there are for leisure and can be a good place to start regarding interest for new or renewed participation. Some activities might just be things that you would like to learn more about before you really look at whether or not you want to participate. This exercise is a good base for leisure planning and will be more meaningful if looked at in conjunction with your leisure needs and resources so that you can intentionally select something that will meet a need or create balance with other things in your life.

Leisure Interest Inventory – Adults

Directions

Following is a list of leisure activities. Please check off all activities that you have an interest for. It may be an activity that you have never done before or don't think that you have the skills or equipment to do but still check it off if it is of interest to you. Don't prejudge and rule things out before you find out more about it!

✓		Comments
	Aerobics	
	Aquasize	
	Archery	
	Art Appreciation	
	Backgammon	
	Badminton	
	Baking	
	Ballroom Dance	
	Basketball	
	Biking (motor)	
	Bird Watching	
	Boating (motor)	
	Bowling	
	Bridge	
	Cake Decorating	
	Calligraphy	
	Canoeing	
	Checkers	
	Chess	
	Church Activities	
	Cloud Watching	
	Collecting Items, e.g., (coins, stamps, cards, etc.)	
	Community Association Activities	

	Computer Games	
	Cooking	
	Cribbage	
	Cross Country Skiing/Pulking	
	Crossword Puzzles	
	Cycling (pedal)	
	Dining Out	
	Drama (acting)	
	Drawing (sketching, cartoons, etc)	
	Education – continuing education	
	Entertaining in your home	
	Family Leisure Activity	
	Farmers Market	
	Festival Going	
	First Aid Training	
	Fishing	
	Fitness Exercises	
	Football	
	Frisbee	
	Geo Caching	
	Golf	
	Handball	
	Hip Hop	
	Home Decorating	
	Horse Shoes	
	Horseback Riding	
	Ice Hockey/Sledge Ice Hockey	
	Ice Skating/Ice Picking	
	Internet	



	Jewelry Making	
	Jigsaw Puzzles	
	Juggling	
	Kayaking	
	Kids Activities (engage with children or grandchildren)	
	Knitting/Crocheting	
	Lacrosse	
	Language Classes	
	Lapidary	
	Listening to Music	
	Martial Arts/Self Defense	
	Meditation	
	Mentoring	
	Music Concerts	
	Nature Hiking	
	Needle work/embroidery	
	Officiating Sport - specify	
	Opera	
	Orienteering	
	Painting	
	Party Going	
	Pets	
	Photography	
	Pinball	
	Plants/Gardening	
	Playing a Musical Instrument	
	Pottery	
	Racquetball	
	Reading	



	Relaxation	
	Ringette	
	Rugby	
	Running/Jogging/Wheeling	
	Sailing	
	Scuba Diving	
	Sculpting	
	Sewing	
	Shopping	
	Shuffleboard	
	Singing	
	Skiing/Sled Skiing	
	Snorkelling	
	Snow Boarding	
	Snow Shoeing	
	Soccer	
	Social Club	
	Social Media Sites	
	Softball/Baseball	
	Square Dance	
	Squash	
	Sudoku	
	Surfing	
	Symphony	
	Swimming	
	Table Tennis (Ping Pong)	
	Tennis	
	Tent Camping	
	Theatre (live plays, dance, etc.)	
	Tobogganing	

	Touring (local)	
	Trailer Camping	
	Travel (distances)	
	Video Games	
	Visiting with Friends	
	Volleyball	
	Volunteering by choice ☺ (huge variety of options)	
	Walking	
	Watching Live Sport	
	Watching Television	
	Water Skiing	
	Weight Training	
	Woodworking	
	Writing (stories, poems, other)	
	Yoga	
	Zumba	
	Others (add others to help expand the list)	



It's Important to Me

Target Age Group: Adults

Amount of Time: 20 -60 minutes depending upon discussion time

Facilitation Notes

Purpose

This exercise gives us an opportunity to reflect on our needs in a general way which contributes to our leisure planning.

Instructions

Print the list and read through it, checking off needs that are important to you. When done take time to think about these statements and try to pick the top five needs that are important to you. List them on the back of your page and then write down any leisure activities that you currently do that contribute to these needs. This may help us understand why we choose activities and what we get out of them.

Discussion

Needs are what motivate us to take action and when those needs are met we feel satisfaction. Along with your interests, resources and any potential barriers, being aware of our needs helps us make choices unique to our personal situation.

It is good to be aware of our needs so we can more intentionally choose leisure activities that have the potential to meet those needs. As a social activity, discuss your own needs or even the general list and what activities might meet those needs. If you have completed a Leisure Interest Inventory, you could look at any activities that you were interested and think about whether they might meet some of the needs you identified in this exercise.

Being aware of our needs is one of the most important pieces of information in leisure planning. There are other exercises that can be used to assess personal needs. This is an area that is continuously changing depending upon other things in your life.

It's Important to Me**Directions**

Read the list below and check off the items that are most important to you. Although these may seem like very general statements, they can help guide your leisure planning.

- | | |
|--|---|
| _____ to do something meaningful | _____ to feel committed to something |
| _____ to be confident | _____ to compete with myself to do better |
| _____ to contribute to my community | _____ to develop more skills |
| _____ to feel at peace | _____ to use and improve my skills |
| _____ to continue learning | _____ to be close to nature |
| _____ to be physically active | _____ to keep busy |
| _____ to be creative/express | _____ to get recognition |
| _____ to relax and take it easy | _____ to be a success at what I do |
| _____ to do something different from work | _____ to learn more about myself |
| _____ to be entertained | _____ to develop friendships |
| _____ to be able to do what I want | _____ to meet a variety of people |
| _____ to be spontaneous | _____ to help others |
| _____ to be challenged | _____ to laugh and enjoy |
| _____ to do things with my family | _____ to be in attractive surroundings |
| _____ to do things my own way | _____ others |
| _____ to have support from others | _____ |
| _____ to have something to show for my efforts | _____ |
| | _____ |

Adapted from: *By Opportunity of Leisure: Leisure and Your Lifestyle.* (n.d.). Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation.



Leisure Activity Planning Exercise

Target Age: Adult

Amount of Time Required: Approximately one hour (plus recommended activities if they have not been completed in advance – “Leisure Interest Inventory”, “It’s Important to Me”, and “On My Side”)

Facilitation Notes

Purpose

This tool helps guide an individual through a leisure activity planning process. The worksheet helps bring together information from a number of other self-assessment activities so that the user can make meaningful leisure choices. The following exercises should be completed prior to using this planning tool: Leisure Interest Inventory, It’s Important to me, and On My Side.

This is not a comprehensive planning process and does not look at balance of activities or changing needs over time; it is an activity goal setting exercise that demonstrates how different types of information can be pulled together to make informed leisure choices.

Instructions

This planning worksheet helps an individual to synthesize information that they have collected through other leisure education exercises. The purpose is to intentionally plan for a new leisure pursuit that will meet identified needs. It is easiest to print the planning sheets and work through them individually to develop a goal with an action plan.

Once the worksheet is completed, it is beneficial to discuss information with another person or small group. If desired, adjust the plan based on anything new that was discovered in conversation. This person/people can become supporters or leisure partners to encourage you in reaching your goal(s).

Debrief and applications

Congratulations on taking the first step in planning for a change in your leisure activity. This can help us break away from our regular patterns and be aware of or try something new. Remember to reflect and discuss your learnings with others – this is the beginning of defining your leisure identity and it is valuable to share and learn from others.

This planning exercise may prompt further action as this is just one step. Planning to achieve balance in one’s leisure time requires a more in-depth look at the social, intellectual, physical, creative and spiritual aspects of a leisure lifestyle. Remember – anything is possible if we plan for our leisure by getting to know ourselves, our communities and the activities that we could engage in to enhance our lives. It is up to us – we just need to reflect, ask questions, learn and apply all of this information to making choices that will build positive results!

Leisure Activity Planning Sheet

I learned that three of my top personal needs are (*It's Important to Me Exercise*):

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

I learned that I am interested in many things (*Leisure Interest Inventory*), especially:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

Looking at my interests and how my needs could be met by one of these activities, I have formed a leisure goal to intentionally try a new activity or get further involved in an existing one.

My leisure activity goal is:

What might keep me from reaching this goal? (Check as many as apply)

- I don't have the skills, ability or knowledge
- I don't want it bad enough to work for it
- I'm afraid I might fail
- I'm afraid of what others might think
- Others don't want me to reach this goal
- The goal is too difficult to accomplish
- I don't have the resources (money, equipment, partner, etc.)
- Other reasons:



What are some steps I could take so that the above things don't prevent me from reaching my goal?

The first steps I should take if I am going to reach my goal.

Do I still want to reach this goal? Yes ___ No ___ Undecided ___

I, _____ have decided that I would like to achieve the goal of:

My target date for reaching my goal is: _____

Signed by: _____

Supporter (if desired): _____

Discovering the Possibilities or Alphabet Challenge

Target Age: Adult

Amount of Time Required: 20 minutes plus debrief of 10-20 minutes

Facilitation Notes

Purpose

This is a fun group brainstorming exercise to encourage thinking about leisure outside of one's normal routine. The outcomes are fun, group accomplishment, broader thinking about leisure and sparking motivation for participation.

Instructions

A recording sheet is required – print copies of the one below or just have participants use their notebook, a coloured sheet of paper or whatever is available. Break into groups of about 3 or 4 people. Have groups select someone to record their ideas (or two people if the speed might be a challenge in terms of capturing all ideas).

Remind participants that this is brainstorming exercise and there should be no evaluating other's ideas. The task is to find one word beginning with each letter of the alphabet that fits the category that the group is assigned. The simplest is to have all groups brainstorm activities that they could do for recreation or leisure but if they are in close quarters they will hear each other and may not be as creative as they could be with their lists.

Using multiple categories for brainstorming helps explore the many sides of leisure. For example, have one or two groups brainstorm in each of the following categories.

- 1) recreation /leisure activities
- 2) leisure settings (places that you could be at leisure)
- 3) positive things that can come out of participating in leisure (ie exercise, relaxation, fun)

Alternatives

If you would like to target learning around a specific aspect of leisure, you can use other categories. For example, have some groups brainstorm physical activities and other groups brainstorm leisure activities. When debriefing focus discussion around the differences and similarities between physical activity and leisure and the value of each. There are many ways that this tool can be used to meet your specific desired outcome. To broaden awareness, the activity could be used multiple times with more focused brainstorming ie indoor activities, outdoor activities, activities that one can do alone, activities that require 2 or more people etc.

During the activity

Keep them moving and excited – make it a challenge if you want with the first group finished getting a prize or perhaps a leisure related benefit (selecting an activity that the group will try out next class). Ask



the groups to yell out when they are done and then give a few minutes for remaining groups to try and complete their A – Z list.

Debrief and applications

Congratulate everyone for their accomplishment and have groups read their lists aloud slowly so that others can hear. Clap at the end of each group reading, and make comments on the ideas, creativity etc. Ask participants if they have any comments on the lists. Discuss how this can help us to get out of our regular patterns and be aware of or try something new. Remember – anything is possible if we have an interest and plan for our leisure if we want to try one of these new ideas.

Discovering the Possibilities – Alphabet Challenge

A	N
B	O
C	P
D	Q
E	R
F	S
G	T
H	U
I	V
J	W
K	X
L	Y
M	Z

On My Side: A Leisure Assets Inventory

Target Age Group: 9-12, 13 (General)

Amount of time: 20 minutes and up

Facilitation Notes

Purpose

This activity focuses strengths or assets available to support or even trigger new leisure interests. For example: if you live right next to a park, that could be an asset in terms of trying new leisure pursuits especially if you have a need to be outdoors or an interest in bird watching or walking. There are assets all around us so why not focus on what we DO have instead of always on what we don't have.

Instructions

Print the chart and fill out as individuals or in small groups. There are prompts in the left hand column and depending upon the age of participants, there may need to be some examples given or facilitation required to get started with the list of assets on the right. Encourage thinking and sharing about how the the categories listed can be leisure assets.

It is great to fill this out after the Activity Checklist/Leisure Interest Inventory. If so, the activities can trigger assets that might be needed to get involved in the new leisure interests. What do you need in order to participate. Do you need information? Equipment? A partner or team? Lessons? A gym?

Making use of the inventory

Use the inventory to do individual leisure planning. Start with the assets, or with the activity and try to match some of the assets with activities. For example: A young Mom frantic that she can't get exercise may learn to view her baby monitor as an asset or her neighbor that she can trade babysitting with so that they can both exercise; A child with a parking lot outside their home can be shown that a piece of chalk can create hop scotch and foursquare.

Alternately these can be combined as a larger group to create more of a family, group or community assets inventory! Combine on a big chart on the wall and celebrate all of the great resources "on your side". Use this chart to start discussions from the asset out. For example: With that new "U-pick" Berry Farm right down the road, what leisure activities might we be able to do? – Berry picking, making jam, learning about farming, bringing seniors to enjoy the air and fresh berries, etc.

On My Side: A Leisure Assets Inventory

Do you have access to resources that are an asset to your leisure participation and well-being? Or maybe assets that would be helpful to friends or family? (list and explain)

Category	Assets/Resources
<p>Location: Think about where you live, work, go to school or your community in general. Are you close to parks, facilities, (or special amenities such as a lake) that could be helpful in supporting your leisure?</p>	
<p>Knowledge: Do you have special knowledge that could support participation in a specific leisure activity? Or maybe knowledge that would help someone else?</p>	
<p>People: Are there people in your family or community that could teach you something, be your partner for an activity, have knowledge that you need to get involved? People that might want to sponsor or coach?</p>	
<p>Time: What periods of time do you have to do something that you would enjoy? Morning? Lunch hour? Wednesday evenings? 10 minute time slots? Anytime? Never? Where do you find time? How do you make time? Trade time?</p>	
<p>Confidence: Assets/resources are not only outside of us and things we can see. Do you have confidence to participate in certain kinds of activities? Alone? In small groups? Artistic? Physical? Computers? Nature? Use that asset/strength to support leisure for yourself or others.</p>	
<p>Skills: What special skills do you have that could be an asset to your leisure? How about family members? Neighbours? Others in the community? How can you benefit from that? Could you work together? Help others?</p>	

<p>Money: Do you or does someone else have money that is available to you? Do you need money? If so, could you earn money by working at something? e.g., Some people make money officiating sport, even though it is a leisure activity for them. Trading/bartering can also provide access to resources.</p>	
<p>Equipment: Do you have equipment you are not using that is stored in your basement? Outgrown some things? Maybe someone else could use these or you could use them for a new activity? Or you could donate it? Need equipment – what are the resources available to you?</p>	
<p>Other: What else is on your side that could tip the scale in your favour. Maybe a new and enjoyable activity is possible. Just focus on all the assets “on your side” that could help your new interests.</p>	

