ABSTRACT

Engagement in leisure activities that are meaningful and enjoyable is highly associated with health and a positive quality of life. However, rehabilitation programs for individuals with physical impairments do not routinely include leisure participation in their intervention programs. In order to improve the ability of individuals with disabilities to participate in leisure activities within the community, interventions must focus on evaluating leisure interests and satisfaction, on improving skills and confidence in this domain, and identifying and overcoming barriers to participation. This project will: i. conduct focus groups with current/former clients of the Jewish Rehabilitation Hospital (JRH), family members, clinicians, managers and community leaders to select appropriate equipment for an intergenerational inclusive Wellness Park to be created at the hospital, and to identify facilitators and barriers for its use; ii. based on the findings from the focus group and from a scoping review of the literature, develop a manual to provide guidelines for incorporating this equipment and activities into rehabilitation interventions; iii. conduct training seminars to sensitize clinicians to the importance of leisure participation and to present approaches and suggestions of how to include leisure in clinical practice; and iv. evaluate change in clinicians’ knowledge and attitude toward leisure participation as well as their intention to utilize leisure interventions in their practice.

Participants of focus groups will be selected for their interest in the project, willingness to contribute, and ability to express their ideas in a group format. Each focus group will be heterogeneous and will include approximately eight participants. Groups will be facilitated by a researcher with expertise in the conduct of focus groups and will be assisted by 1-2 members of the research team. Open-ended questions will be used to direct the group to the themes of interest and will be followed by targeted questions about the predetermined categories of leisure activity (music, physical activity, table games, social activity/nostalgia, gardening). The aim is to arrive at a consensus regarding the selection and use of recreational equipment for the JRH Wellness Park. The focus groups will be recorded and transcribed and will be analyzed using directed content analysis. Focus group findings and results from a scoping review of the literature will be used by the researchers to create a written manual to provide guidelines for the utilization of the Wellness Park for rehabilitation purposes. Rehabilitation clinicians, nurses and support staff will be invited to attend three training seminars which will address the importance of leisure as a goal.
in rehabilitation and will provide strategies to incorporate leisure into treatment planning. Participants will complete a questionnaire evaluating change in their knowledge and attitude, as well as their intention to incorporate leisure activities into clinical practice. The ultimate aim of this initiative is to improve the ability, confidence and engagement in leisure activities of individuals with disabilities once they complete their program of rehabilitation and return to the community.