Gender-Specific Swim Messaging

Here are some messages on gender-specific swims that can help you share information on and advocate for gender-specific swims in your community:

1. Swimming and water recreation activities provide opportunities for people to make healthy choices about exercise.

2. In addition to being a healthy choice, knowing how to swim is important for water safety. Along with supervision, lifeguarded swim areas and life jackets, knowing how to swim protects people from drowning.

3. However, drowning is the second leading cause of death among children and teens, and disproportionately affects racial and ethnic minorities. People of color are less likely to learn how to swim. Also, healthy choices like swimming are not easy to make in all our neighborhoods.

4. The choices we make for our health are personal decisions and are shaped by our own unique cultural values and beliefs. The decisions we make are also shaped by our environment. Right now, refugees and people of color have greater barriers to swimming and water recreation. Among these barriers is the lack of recreational programming that acknowledges and incorporates their cultural values and beliefs.

5. Gender can be an additional barrier to swimming and water recreation. Because they address specific cultural values and beliefs, gender-specific swim programs have been demonstrated to reduce these barriers and improve access to healthy exercise choices to underserved communities in King County.

6. 'Gender-specific swim' (or 'gender swim') is the term used to refer to programming at pools in which there is an opportunity to participate in water recreation with only the same sex individuals, including staff and lifeguards. Gender swims are offered for modesty and cultural belief reasons, and are open to all people regardless of age, religion, race or ethnicity. Gender swims can, and should, be provided for both male and female genders. Pools providing gender swims usually make provisions to allow young children to accompany their parents/guardians during gender swims.

For more information, visit www.seattlechildrens.org/dp.

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