

Everyone Swims Stakeholder and Focus Group Summary

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Background

- ❖ King County is a region surrounded and defined by water, where swimming is a lifetime skill associated with opportunities for recreation, physical activity, and vocation
- ❖ The ability to swim correlates strongly with household income and whether parents themselves can swim¹
- ❖ Drowning rates among people of color occur at disproportionately higher rates¹
- ❖ Safe water recreation activities provide important opportunities for leisure time activity, a factor in the quest against obesity²
- ❖ Swimming skills are a protective factor against the risk of drowning³



In the Media

'Six Teens' Drowning a Reminder of Swimming Disparity' August 3, 2010 NPR

'How many Americans Can't Swim? The Demographics of Land-lubbing' August 4, 2010 Slate Magazine

'Economics Shouldn't Jeopardize Kids' Safety in the Water' July 14, 2010 The Spokesman-Review

'Organizations Trying to Teach More Minority Children How to Swim: Drowning rates of African American Children is Three Times that of Whites, Statistics Show' July 24, 2010 Chicago Tribune



Everyone Swims Goal

Increase widespread access to pools and water recreation throughout King County among low income and culturally/ethnically diverse populations



Stakeholder Summary



Methods

- I. Design survey**
- II. Contract subcontract partners**
- III. Arrange phone interviews**
- IV. Conduct interviews**
- V. Analyze data**
- VI. Develop themes for review with partners**
- VII. Finalize themes**



Participant Info

Partner surveys completed: 26

Water partners: 13

Clinic partners: 12

Key Informants: 1

Scope

- 29 individuals participated
- 100% of CPPW designated areas represented
- 100% of subcontracted partners participated, representing 25 community health clinic sites, 27 pools, and 3 alternative water recreation organizations



Swim Program Scholarships

Themes

- Ensuring that swimmers value programming
- Need for a more efficient approval process
- Restrictions by age, programming, residency vary
- Availability of funds not always advertised

Quote

“We want to avoid the negotiation that families have to go through. For example, if you are eligible for Medicaid, you should not have to document how poor you are to a water facility. Imagine having to explain why you need assistance over and over again, and trying to retain your dignity.”



Partnerships

Themes

- Partnerships are powerful!
- Model policies and systems exist
- Need to have a champion
- Water *and* clinic partners desire more partnerships
- Links with other community organizations

Quote

“We need to get the word out there about the free programming we offer and partner with more organizations, especially those who serve low income populations.”



Referrals to Swim Programs

Themes

- Informal referrals (web-based searching)
- Personal knowledge
- Water partners unaware of referrals from clinics
- Clinics need updated resources on hand
- Some clinics have formalized referrals for pools

Quote

“When swimming comes up for families, I usually refer to the nearest YMCA, community center, or Parks and Rec pool, based on what programming the family needs, where they live, etc. I get most resources from facility websites, print online forms, and tell the family what they need to do.”



Swim Ability Screening

Themes

- Some providers are champions
- Screening based on guidelines or other standardized tools
- Time perceived as a barrier for some clinics
- Need to have resources to provide if bring up question

Quote

“Screening at age 6 is a good fit because there are not a lot of other things in the 6 year well-child visit to focus on because vaccines, school readiness, etc have already been done. If we ask this, we would need to consider what we have to offer. We need to have resources if we are going to bring it up—it needs to be quick and simple.”



Swim Programs for Special Populations

Themes

- Parent-child swim lessons not common
- Adult water phobias
- Water exercise class is attended by older populations
- Partnering to provide programming for certain populations
- Working hard to meet gender only swimming needs

Quotes

“We don’t know what families from these populations need because we haven’t been serving them”

“We just got to the point where attendance at gender-only swimming events didn’t equal the effort we put into it.”



Cultural Barriers

Themes

- Acceptable swimwear
- Great value placed on provider advice
- Assumption that people know what to do at pools
- Input is needed from populations that are low income and diverse

Quotes

“Immigrant families really place a lot of importance on what providers say– the provider can educate and promote the value of swimming from a recreation *and* safety perspective.”



Other Themes

Themes

- Concern about pool closures
- Passion and commitment to customer service

Quote

“Our continued goal at all pools is to make all people in our community feel welcome from the time they step through our doors to the time they leave. Getting people in the door and making people feel comfortable, like they belong here, and helping them understand how to access our programs and enjoy them to the fullest.”



Opportunities for Improvement

- Policies can enable creative staff solutions!
- Partner with organizations that have overlapping goals
- Utilize 'captive waiting room audience' in clinics
- Draw upon experience from working clinic-water partnerships
- Community organization partnerships
- Income verification is already a process of clinic protocols
- Access for parents to learn how to swim
- Some pools are better suited for special programs
- Standardizing swim ability screening at 6 year well child check
- Clear commitment to customer service and to improving the current situation



Barriers to Accessing Swim Programs

- Scholarship application process
- Registration process
- Families not knowing what to expect
- Lack of standard swimming ability screening tool
- Swimwear policies
- Water program information changes fast
- Water program information not uniformly made available
- Limited pool resources
- Language, time and money constraints from a population, clinic and water partner perspective
- Adult water phobias



Focus Group Summary



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Focus Group Methods

- I. Reviewed by Children's Institutional Review Board (IRB)
- II. Used PRECEDE model to inform question development¹
- III. Work with project partners to recruit families representing populations of focus
- IV. Incentives: Focus group participants were given a grocery gift card, child care to attend the meeting, and light snacks
- V. Meetings conducted by culturally appropriate moderators
- VI. Notes transcribed during focus group discussions
- VII. Developed themes for review with partners to identify key opportunities and barriers



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Focus Group Characteristics

Participant Demographics	<i>Everyone Swims!</i> Partner Hosts
5 African-American parents 1 African-American grandparent 1 Caucasian/white parent	Seattle Parks Medgar Evers Pool and Odessa Brown Children's Clinic
7 Mexican-American parents	Seattle Children's Hospital
16 Somali parents	Columbia Public Health Center
14 Vietnamese parents	Columbia Public Health Center
1 Hispanic parent 1 African-American parent 1 African-American grandparent 3 Caucasian/white parents 1 Asian parent	George Pocock Rowing Foundation



Predisposing Factors Assessed*

- Knowledge of scholarships
- Parent or caregiver experience with swimming (including fear of pools and beaches)
- Access to current information about the registration process and swimming pools
- Knowledge of what to expect at swimming pools
- Beliefs about swimming as a life skill
- Availability of role models
- Perceptions of water cleanliness and sanitation

*Antecedents to behavior change that provide the rational or motivation for the behavior



Enabling Factors Assessed*

- Language, time and financial constraints
- Ease and transparency of swimming lesson scholarship process
- Ease of registration process
- Ease of access to programming based on time of day
- Availability of programming for special groups (ie. gender swims for Somali community, organized swims for overweight or obese children)
- Access to information about swimming from a trusted source
- Access to and comfort with swimwear

*Antecedents to behavioral or environmental change that allow a motivation to be realized



Reinforcing Factors Assessed*

- Experience with a swimming program, including programs for special groups
- Experience with swimming teachers and pool staff (demeanor, cultural sensitivity and languages spoken)
- Availability of reminder phone calls for swimming lessons
- Gaining skills and progressing in swimming ability
- Ease of reenrollment
- Perception of benefits (learning new skill and exercise) as compared to costs (time, money, effort to go swimming)

*Factors following a behavior that provide the continuing reward or incentive for the persistence of the behavior



Swim Program Scholarships

Themes

- Lack of knowledge about where to go and how swimming lessons are organized (in terms of age or level)
- Challenge of paying for lessons for many children and consider family swim lessons to be a more affordable option for larger families
- Felt uncomfortable when asked to provide bank account information
- Appreciative that the family's information was stored in the system after the first application to facilitate ease of reapplication
- Applying that requires multiple tries is embarrassing
- Families want to know if they qualify before they apply
- Families don't know about scholarship opportunities
- Interest in scholarships for open/family swims and pool parties

"I could never afford swimming before, and it is a huge effort to get here. I had to make a huge life change."

-Odessa Brown Community Clinic Parent



Swim Ability Screening

Themes

- Clinic providers and staff are viewed as a trusted source of information about the importance of swimming
- Parents in all groups believed that swimming was good for health and potentially weight loss and maintenance, but did not express much interest in special swimming opportunities for children who are obese or overweight
- Parents emphasized belief in the value of swimming as a safety skill
- Swimming can be presented as both a safety issue and an opportunity for physical activity

"Present it as a safety issue and then give some resources."

Docs should say:

1: 'What kind of sports do you do?'

2: 'Swimming is something to look into.'

3: 'Everyone should know how to swim.'

-George Pocock Rowing Foundation Parent



Referrals to Swim Programs and Water Recreation

Themes

- Need to lessen confusion of finding a pool or water program
- Special programming for clinic patients and families offered at a partner pool are appreciated by those involved in programs for ease of use and sense of belonging
- Families may need help with forms and what to do, especially the first time

"It's probably the last thing we ever think of doing because the kids don't know how to swim and it's much easier to take them to a soccer game."

– Seattle Children's Spanish Speaking Parent



Swim Programs for Special Populations

Themes

- Family swim sessions and swimming lessons viewed as too short
- All groups viewed gender only swims viewed as pools making effort to include all cultures
- Somali women focus group participants unanimously agreed that they could only participate in swimming if there were gender-specific swims
- Parent-child swim lessons wanted, should allow multiple children with parent
- Adults expressed water phobias, but have desire to set an example for their children
- Parents thought children would be less embarrassed if there are other kids like them, in terms of learning to swim when they are older, or swimming for weight loss
- Acceptable swimwear is important to feel sense of belonging
- Hispanic and Vietnamese group participants expressed concern about water being clean
- Value in finding out about water recreation opportunities in places common to culture
- African-American participants expressed concern about discrimination at pools is a concern

"The doctor explained it to me—I can do swimming or walking. My main concern is privacy and do not have a ride. But, it would be really nice to have person who speaks my language at the pool teaching the swimming lessons."

-Columbia Health Center Somali speaking parent



Thank You

