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Queering later life physical activity: Emotions, queer identity, and the psychological adaptation to age-related body changes

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

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WHO IS DOING THE RESEARCH?

The principal investigator for this study is Dr. Erica Bennett, Assistant Professor in the School of Kinesiology at the University of British Columbia (UBC). Dr. Meridith Griffin (co-investigator) is an Associate Professor in the Department of Health, Aging and Society at McMaster University, and Acting Director of the Gilbreath Centre for Studies in Aging. Dr. Meghan McDonough (co-investigator) is a Professor at the University of Calgary in the Faculty of Kinesiology. Dr. Cassandra Phoenix (co-investigator) is an Associate Professor in Physical Activity and Health in the Department of Sport and Exercise Sciences at Durham University.

WHAT IS THE RESEARCH ABOUT?

We are interested in learning about the role of emotions in shaping how queer adults (e.g., lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, trans, etc.) perceive and experience their aging bodies and physical activity. We will conduct a series of 2 interviews with 15 participants who are aged 50 and older and who self-identify as being part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. During first interviews, participants will be asked about their experiences of being queer, their histories with physical activity, as well as about their thoughts and feelings about their aging bodies. During second interviews, participants will be asked to either bring photos that depict their thoughts and feelings about their queer identities, aging bodies, and physical activity for discussion, or they will be invited to

engage in a body-mapping activity where they will be asked to draw, paint, and/or write on a life size body outline on paper, to depict their thoughts and feelings about their queer identities, aging bodies, and physical activity. The researchers will then identify and interpret patterns within the interview and visual data pertaining to experiences with emotions, physical activity, the aging body, and queer identities.

WHAT WILL PARTICIPATING IN THE STUDY INVOLVE?

If you agree to participate, you will be invited to take part in a series of two, one-on-one interviews occurring 1-2 months apart (conducted in English) that will take place in person at a location of your choosing in line with public health guidelines. Each interview will be approximately 1.5 hours in length and will be conducted by PhD students Olivia Fischer or Naomi Maldonado-Rodriguez, who are research assistants working with the research team on this project. The discussions that take place will be audio-recorded and transcribed (written out word for word) for analysis. The second interview will take place in a private location where art materials will be supplied and the body map can be created, or the photos will be shared.

The researcher will provide you with a personal health assessment to complete prior to each interview. You and the researcher will sit 6 feet apart. The researcher conducting the interview will wear a mask, and you will be provided with an optional mask to wear. You will also be provided with hand sanitizer. All researchers who may conduct an interview with you (Erica or Naomi) are fully vaccinated, however you are not required to be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 to participate.

You do not need to talk about any issues you do not feel comfortable discussing and if you wish to withdraw from the study you may do so at any time without having to give any reason for doing so. There will be no negative consequences to you or anyone else if you chose to withdraw. This study will not subject you to any physical risk. Although we do not expect any psychological risk, in the event you would like to further discuss your feelings regarding the topics discussed in the interviews, accommodations will be made for you. We will accept participants for the study based on order of initial contact with the researcher.

WHAT WILL BE DONE WITH THE INFORMATION I PROVIDE?

Any information you provide within this interview will be anonymized. You will be identified by a pseudonym (fake name) and identifying information will be removed. All identifying information on the photos and body maps will be removed for anonymity (e.g. faces of people will be blurred for anonymity). All interview transcripts and photos will be kept on a password protected computer of the principal investigator and no one other than the researchers associated with this study will have access to this information. The information collected will be written up for publication in scholarly journals, and presented at academic conferences. You will have the choice of whether or not to make your anonymous photos and artwork available for publishing.

WHAT IF I WISH TO WITHDRAW FROM THE STUDY?

Your participation in the research is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time without having to give any reason for doing so and without experiencing any negative consequences.

HOW WILL THE RESEARCH BE USEFUL?

The findings from this study will further our understanding of the role of queer identity in shaping how older adults experience physical activity and their aging bodies. Findings from the interviews with participants will inform the creation of resources for physical activity stakeholders and practitioners working with older adults in how to foster and promote inclusive physical activity and later life positive body image.

If you would like more information about this study or to learn how to become involved, please contact Erica Bennett at erica.bennett@ubc.ca or at 604-827-3094.

Thank you!