

Sport for Resilience: The Canadian Wellbeing Crisis & Sport-Based Support

Or

- *The pickle we are in,*
- *how we got ourselves there,*
- *and how sport can help*

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Background: local to national



- 1970's assumptions:
 - Outdoor & unstructured
 - Recreation access/ Wellbeing for all
 - Everything is about developing citizens & people
- Local Field of Practice:
 - 9yrs community fitness business, NCCP coach
 - Regional Recreation Committee Board
- National Scope: NSO
 - Directed overhaul of coach & athlete training and certification
 - LTAD adaptation & implementation, sport participation & physical literacy
- Academic: Sport (physical rec) for development (Resilience)

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Healthy Communities



Healthy People

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***Inactive population & reduced talent pool
are related, serious problems***



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Silos Hinder

*Silos are
recent creations,
not natural laws.*

Other silos:
Fed, Prov, Munic
Public/Private/NFP

Resilience: Even the Strongest Go Only As Far As Environment Will Allow



“The capacity of an individual to navigate their way to resources that sustain wellbeing, plus the capacity of their physical environment to provide those resources; plus the capacity of the individual, their family and the community to create resources which are culturally relevant.”

(Resilience in Action, Liebenberg & Ungar)

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Long History Canadian Values:

- Physical recreation as vehicle for health, wellbeing and human development
- Benefit to all of access to resources for wellbeing
 - 19th Century Romanticism & Christian Socialism
 - Parks Movement: urban parks, wilderness preserve (National & Provincial responsibility)
 - Physical rec for developing engaged Citizens
 - Sport simply an extension of amateur physical rec

Early Days: Greenspace, Physical Activity & Wellbeing

Great outdoors

Free access to park spaces & programs address public health & social issues

Team sport emphasis increases to train large numbers at once

Sport: entertainment industry, vehicle for nationalism

1850's-90's

1. Rec a wealthy privilege



1910's

2. Rec a public health necessity



Boys & Girls Clubs of Canada



1940's

3. Rec a matter of national security and citizenship



1960-70's

4. Rec a right & badge of honour for a developed democracy



5-day workweek becomes standard



Industrial & Bolshevik Revolution

Inter-War

Cold War

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Rec for health and constructive past-time

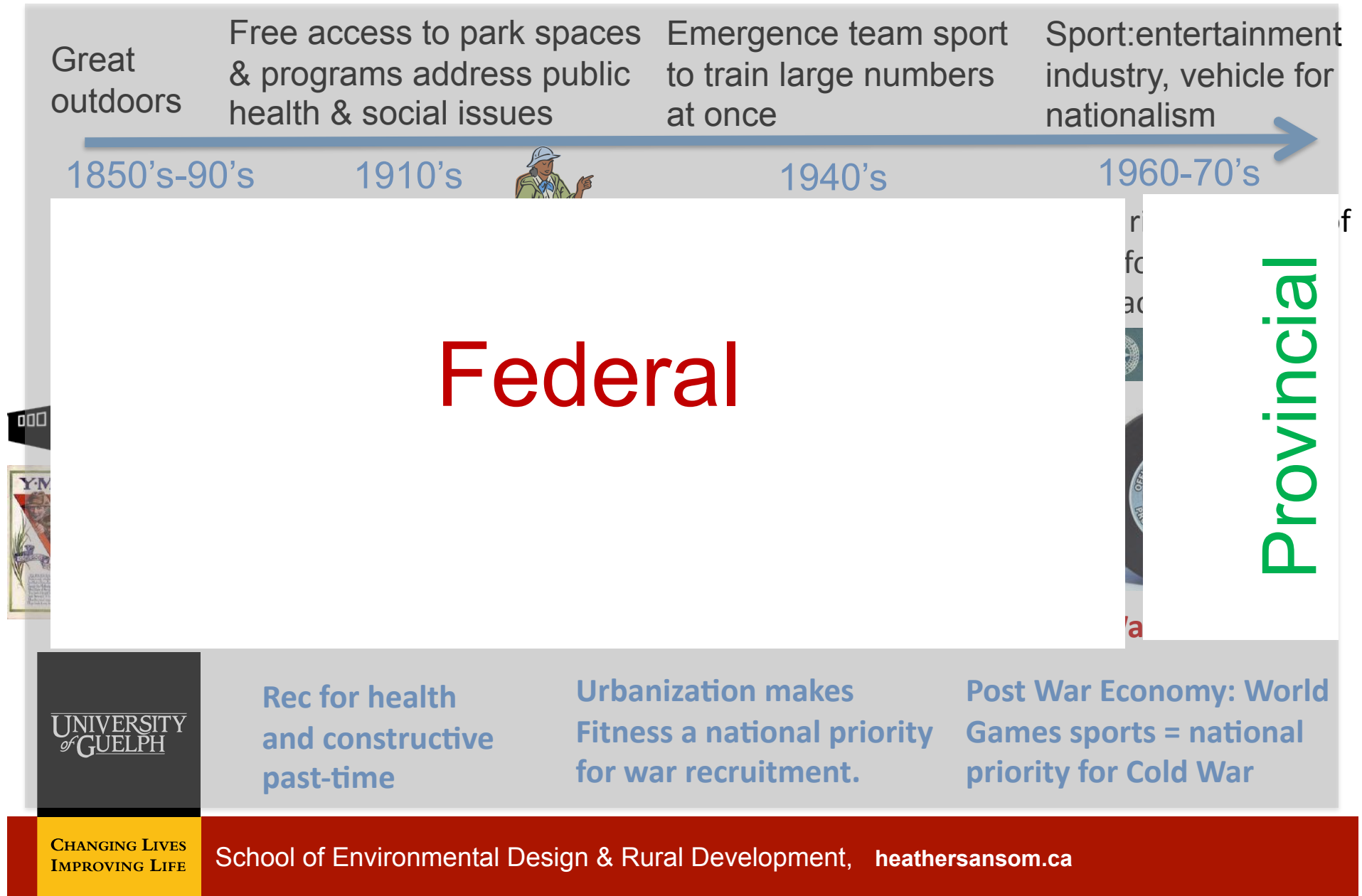
Urbanization makes Fitness a national priority for war recruitment.

Post War Economy: World Games sports = national priority for Cold War

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Locus of Responsibility Shifts



The Canadian Youth Wellbeing Crisis: *plenty of evidence*

Social, Emotional, Physical, Mental



- OECD ranking: 25-27/30 on youth wellbeing- *not 2nd best! (3rd worst)*
- Obesity/overweight *epidemic/pandemic*
 - Over 85% youth insufficient PA “*Obesogenic environment*”
- Mental health = *new morbidity*
 - Historical highs mental health diagnosis & medication
 - 25% all income brackets considered vulnerable on school entry
 - 60% youth alone time/lack adult mentorship
 - 86% girls, 75% boys critically low self-esteem by age 15

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First generation die *younger* than parents

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Population is Disenfranchised from Organized Sport:

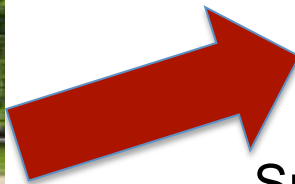
75% not participating

- >17% decline since 1992
- SED-dependent:
 - Participation correlated to household income
 - 2 top reasons: cost, lack leisure time

Costs of Physical Inactivity Crisis:

- Loss of 60,000 working life years / year (1.92B)
- Healthcare 50% Provincial budget
 - expected 80% by 2030

From Nature & Movement for Wellbeing to Field Silos Managed for Mass



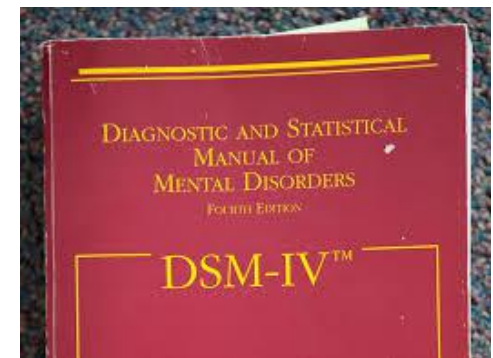
Sport



Therapy



1978



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Changing View: Rec=Commodity, Social ~~investment~~ Spend

Outdoor managed parks

Highly organized activity

1970's-80's

1990's- 2000's

Rec still a public service;
shift toward personal
consumer driven
industry

Loss of recreational
locations: development,
parking

Emphasis Fee Based Access
Cost Recovery / More Built
Infrastructure



1976 Montreal Olympics: Increase funding
sport and fitness from 6-39M\$

1987 National Recreation Statement

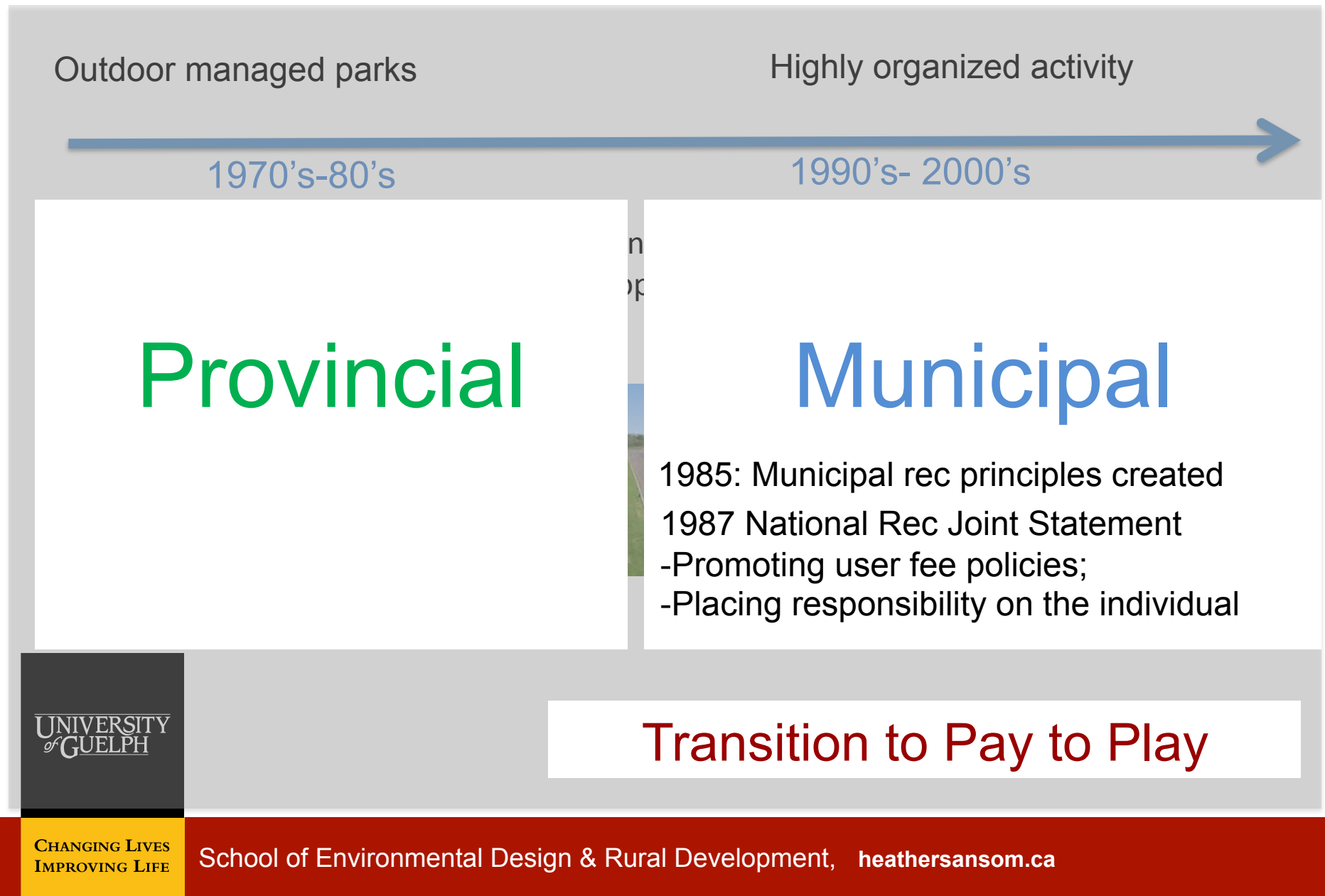
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1980's: less need military-ready fitness,
increase emphasis on media-driven \$\$

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Changing View: Rec=Commodity, Social ~~investment~~ Spend



Sport, Rec & Wellbeing Key Moments

- 1859 Recreation Grounds Act
- 1870's: Stanley Park, Mount Royal
- **1883: Public Parks Act**
- 1904 Parks and Playground Assoc., Montreal
- 1912 First Indoor Rec Facility
- 1939 Youth Training Act
- **1943 National Fitness Act**
- 1961 Bill C-131- Fitness & Amateur Sport
- 1968 Task Force Sport Policy
- 1972 First Municipal Parks & Rec Plan
- **1975 First Provincial Ministry Culture & Rec**
- 1976 First Rec Facility Standards
- 1980's Lottery Funding
- 1985 Municipal Rec Principles
- **1987 National Recreation Statement**
- 1991 Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS)
- 2001 Canadian sport policy
- **2007 CCHS shifts to annual reporting**
- 2010 Pan-Cdn Healthy Living Strategy
- **2012 Canadian Index of Wellbeing**
(wellbeing decline despite robust economy from 1994-2007)
- 2014: Active Healthy Kids Report Card
- 2015: ParticipACTION Report Card

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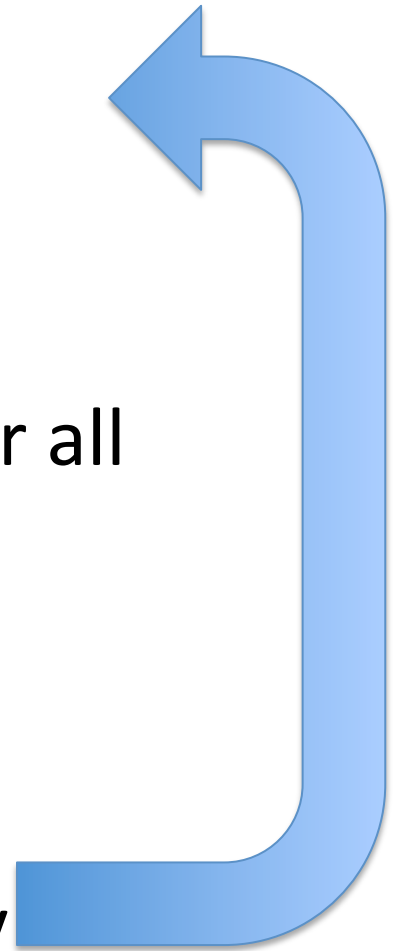
Coming Full Circle: PA = Healthy Development

Population health & wellbeing concerns

Recreation for all

Individual Fitness

Sport & Sport Industry



We Still Believe in 'Sport':

- Non-partisan, faith agnostic
- Incredibly diverse (so many options, especially outside media-supported sport industry)
- Can contribute to multiple needs at once
 - Rec therapy proves can engage high needs
 - No need for psychotherapy to have therapeutic benefits
- We just know that physical activity is good for the whole person

What we believe sport can contribute:

- **Reduce illness and social spend**
 - Estimated \$1 investment: \$10 healthcare & social spend saving
 - 10% increase in PA = sig. health-care cost savings
- **Significant economic contributor** (direct & indirect)
 - Increase productivity (OECD estimates labour hours)
- **Social capital & civic engagement**
 - One of largest volunteer engagement sectors
- **Develop citizens & people**
 - Character, teamwork, self-esteem, resilience, etc...

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(by-product: more active people = more elite athletes)

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Hope for Change Through Sport

Recent Important Trends

- Health promotion vs. prevention
- Campaign for physical activity / literacy
- Promotion physical activity shared by
 - National: Sport Canada, Health Canada
 - Provincial: Provinces healthcare spend concern
 - Stakeholders: sport, non-profit, social intervention

(but not yet municipalities: municipal lag)

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Sport-for-development (S4D): Overview

‘sport’ and youth development = recent constructs

- 1990’s emergence of positive youth development
- 2001 UN Task Force Sport for Dev & Peace
- 2003 1st conference on S4D Switzerland
- Academic work grows in 2000’s
- Current small # studies, lots of grey literature

Sport-for-Development: Emerging Field

Use of physical activity for psychological, social, emotional and community development

Community Development

- Developing countries
- Domestic communities labelled at risk
- Political or economic agenda sport event use
- Trojan horse education

Personal Development

- Individuals with at risk diagnosis/ SED label
- As sub-objective within sport-skill framed programming
- Trojan horse education

High rhetoric. Low data.

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Sport-for-Development: Emerging Field

- Within 'positive youth development' framework
 - common reference “5 C’s” , (PYD has moved on since) (competence, confidence, character, connections, contribution)
- Based on areas rarely referenced/drawn on
 - Science of brain plasticity
 - Systems thinking (Bronfenbrenner)
 - Experiential learning/ Outdoor experiential learning
 - Recreation therapy

High rhetoric. Low data.

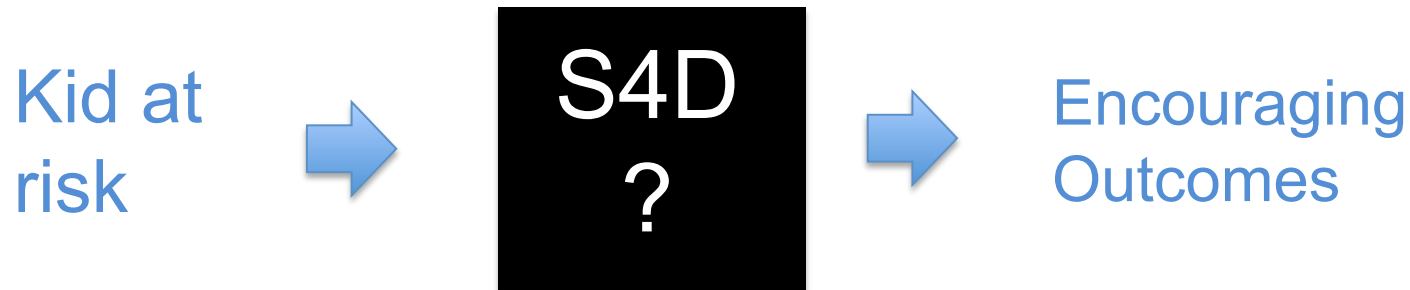
Key Questions: What? How?

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Big Black Box



Problem: difficult to

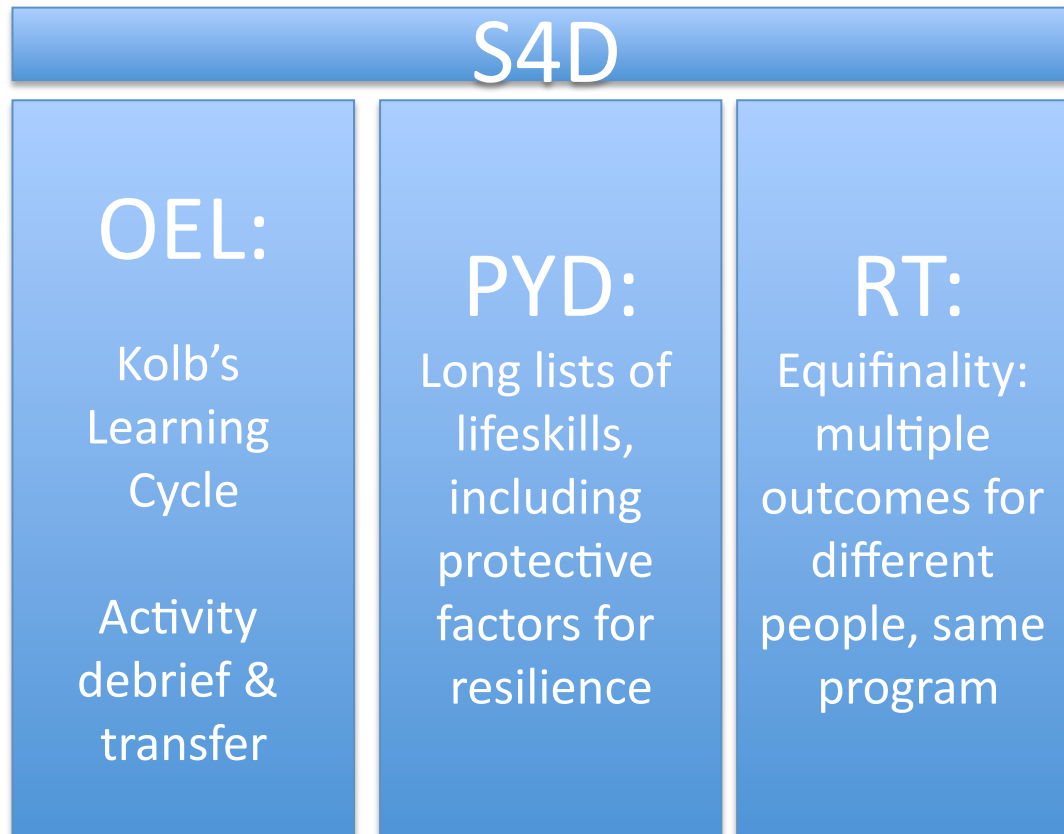
- Persuade program funders
- Design effective programs
- Evaluate programs
- Collect data/get research funding

S4D: new version, very old idea

Silo: sport

Silos:

- Physical rec
- Non-physical rec
- Education
- Social intervention
- Psychotherapy
- Public Health



OEL: Outdoor experiential learning
PYD: Positive Youth Development
RT: Recreation Therapy

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Many Typical S4D Outcomes Parallel Resilience Factors

1. Social connection: peer, Adult/youth relationship
2. Transferable life skills: relationship, exec function
3. Self-esteem/efficacy/confidence
4. Normative youth experience/belonging
5. Training to meet and overcome challenge
6. Positive neuro-transmitters = learning climate
7. Boosts physical activity levels = known contributor to adult healthy lifestyle choice

Key Elements Simple: from PYD/OEL/Rec Therapy

1. Caring adult/mentor
2. Fun & Options + time and multiple encounter
3. Intentional lifeskill program objectives
4. Participant centred + challenges
5. Normative: participation not labelling
6. Intentional debrief and facilitation of transfer through
 1. Discussion
 2. Application (in program & in community)

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Maybe it should be called 'physical rec as therapeutic/formative' instead.

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Time to return to broad-based approach

Let's go get the 75% not benefitting from the sport system we have.

- **Change Assumptions:** (stop target marketing to the few)
 - Participant adversity & lack of sport skills
 - Lifeskills & active for life first goals
- **Interpret Sport as 'Physical Rec'**
 - Choose more socially and culturally relevant activities
- **Engage Variety of program partners**
 - Sport skill programs shown to be less effective
 - Less need for expensive equipment/built infrastructure

Potential of Sport-for-all, Sport-for-dev Mindset



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You Care, You're In, Now What?

Fed/Prov Gov't

- Funding to municipalities, with less bureaucracy (<\$\$, easier applications)
- More applied research funding
- Public Health working with community stakeholders
- Fund active transport/ park infrastructure
- Legislate planning & development

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Municipality

- Facilitate stakeholder collaboration
- Aim at max community inclusion: incl low SED
- Policy enforcing active transport/lifestyle
- promotive development

Non-Profit Youth Researchers

- Offer more PA options
- Collaborate
- COLLECT DATA

Sport Program

- Less drill, more lifeskill
- Mixed ages/gender or family programs
- Programs for increasing activity for all skills
- COLLECT DATA

- Exit academic silo of sport
- Have students help program operators design data collection
- Use more mixed methods

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SPARE SLIDES START

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Barriers to Wellbeing & Physical Rec:

- UN (& Public Health) recognizes Socio-Economic Determinants (SED) such as
 - Family income
 - Parent availability
 - Infrastructure access
- Adversity
 - Bullying, Crime
 - Visible diversity, differing ability
 - Divorce/family dysfunction

- avg. family 77hrs & 60K's (single:30K)
- 75% cite cost of sport
- 25% (x2) crime victims
- 40% deemed 'at risk'
- 60% alone /lacking adult mentorship

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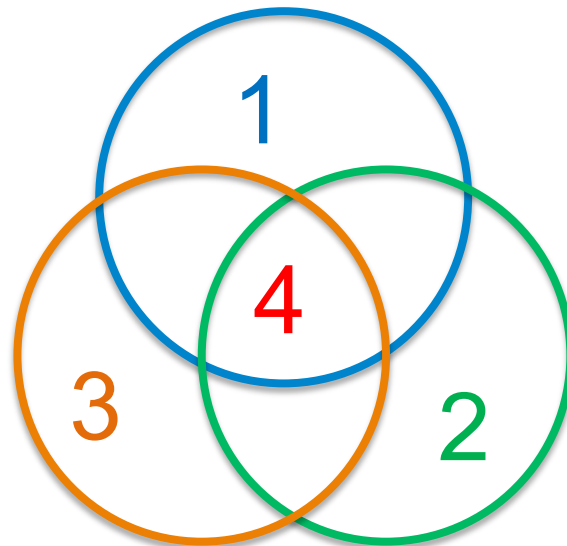
Environmental support needed: PA & Wellbeing

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More Factors = Higher Vulnerability:

1. **Immigrants** (lack \$, social network, culturally appropriate options, exclusion)
2. Children of **single mothers** (resources)
3. **Rural lens** (non-metro = 30%, growing pop, lack access)
4. First Nations/Aboriginal





***If you want
to go far, go
together.***



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Foundations of Sport: Outdoor Activity & Recreation as Social Intervention

- Persistent Beliefs:
 - Physical activity (sport) is good for community
 - Physical activity is physical & mental health promotion
 - Recreation is an economic resource short & long term
 - People still need accessible environment to be active
- New Beliefs (later 20th Century):
 - Sport & rec are important for national identity
 - Sport & rec could be consumer spending drivers
 - There is a mythical 'everyman' & assumed generally level field
 - Reactionary lean toward dogma of Individualism
 - Start to believe health mostly incident management

Killing the Goose & Shooting the Foot:

Commodification of physical rec
+ Prioritization of competitive skill for
media marketable sport

= Failed the population.
Undercuts athlete development

