

**Our Team:**

- Kristen English, Therapeutic Recreation Specialist
- Amy McPherson, Senior Scientist and Scientific Co-Lead
- Dolly Menna-Dack, Transitions Strategy Lead
- Joanne Lee, Youth Leader
- Keelia Quinn, Research Assistant
- Sandy Steplock, Family Leader
- Vicki Keith, Program Coordinator, YMCA
- Kelsey Bell, Life Skills Coach
- Brenna Buchannan, Life Skills Coach

**Organizations/ Programs**



**Background/Rationale:**

Adolescence is a time of growth and development, but youth are at risk of developing poor eating habits and become less active during this time. For youth with disabilities, it can be difficult to find programs that promote healthy lifestyles that are accessible, inclusive and support their individual needs.

We wanted to engage youth and parents in order to learn more about the interests, motivators, successes and barriers for participation in order to design an effective health promotion program for teens with disabilities.

**Design/Methods:**

- This multi-phase project took place from 2015-2018 and included the following activities:
- A literature review and Canada-wide survey for existing health promotion programs for adolescents with disabilities
  - Youth program design workshops & parent survey
  - Pilot program at the North York YMCA
  - Evaluation
    - Goal attainment and qualitative interviews

**What we learning/Results:**

- From the youth perspective:**
- Desired areas of focus for health promotion programs:
- Emotional wellness (mood, coping with stress, feeling supported)
  - Improving physical fitness and/or muscle strength
  - Knowing what physical activity options there are
  - Maintaining healthy body weight
  - Socializing and making friends

# Mind Body Mingle

## Supporting youth with disabilities to make friends, manage stress, get active and be independent



- Factors that influence engagement in health promotion activity:
- Affordability
  - Timing
  - Facility Access/Comfort
  - Age appropriate

**From the parent perspective :**

- inclusivity through support of individual needs
- Desire for engaging activities to inspire and motivate
- Importance of opportunities for success and confidence building

**Mind Body Mingle Pilot**

**What?**  
A community-based, recreational group program for high school students with disabilities. Co-developed with teen clients of Holland Bloorview, Mind Body Mingle provided youth with an opportunity to learn about themselves, participate fun activities that promote wellbeing and make friends while working toward personal wellness goals.

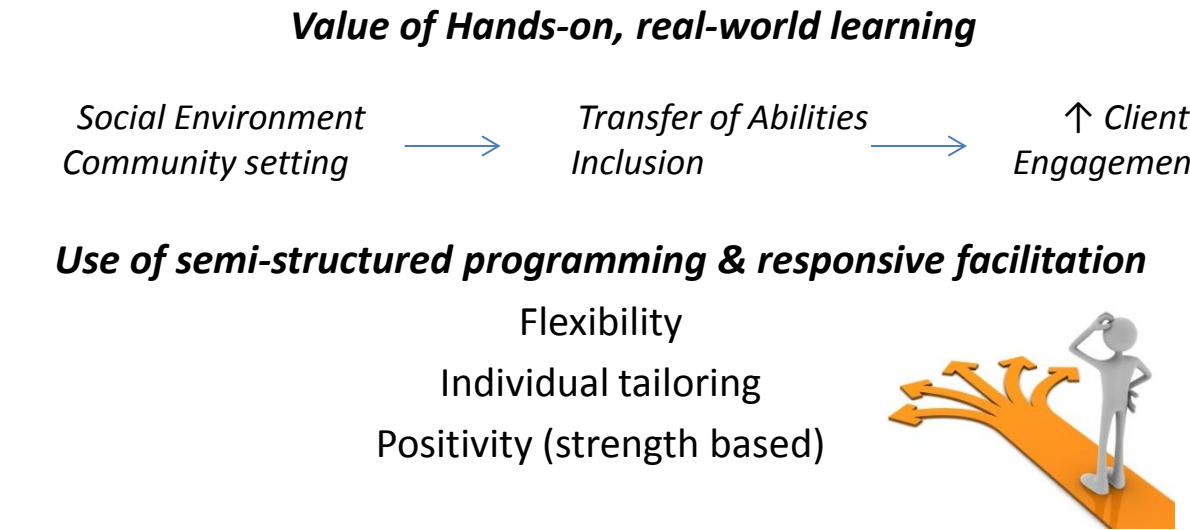
**When?**  
Weekly 2.5 hour sessions over the course of 8 weeks. The program also included 2 individual coaching sessions pre and post program.

**Who?**  
Clients of Holland Bloorview  
13 – 18 years of age  
(up to 21 if still in high school)

**Where?**  
North York YMCA  
567 Sheppard Ave E, North York, ON



**Key Themes/Results from the Pilot**  
From Qualitative Interviews with Participants & Coaches:



**Meaningful client outcomes**

Through the use of Solution Focused Coaching and Goal Attainment Scaling, each participant set a personal goal for the program.

*Goals identified included:*

- Social skills
- Stress management
- Independence
- Activity exploration & enjoyment

	N	Range	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Error
Goal Attainment	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
GASGoalAreaAvg_Tscore	6	30	40	70	58.33	4.773

*“I learned new ways to relax and also be healthy. I use the meditation activities when I’m feeling stressed. I also really liked volleyball, yoga and drumming.”*

*“I had fun every week! I think I made some good friends. I feel less shy now when I talk to other teens”*

**-2017 Mind Body Mingle Participants**

**Conclusions/Next Steps:**

- Dissemination of Mind Body Mingle program manual
- Program to continue at North York YMCA and expand to other regions in October 2019