

# **Exploring the “place” of sport: The community center as a catalyst for friendship among African American female athletes**

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# Presentation Outline

- Ecological systems theory
- Physical literacy perspective
- Project details
- Theme 1: Safe spaces
- Theme 2: Unstructured play
- Theme 3: Physical literacy across lifespan
- Conclusion

# Ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1977)

Human development in context

- Microsystem - interactions with different social spaces and significant others
- Understand space to develop and offer appropriate physical-activity based programs for diverse individuals

# Physical Literacy

“Individuals who are physically literate move with competence and confidence in a wide variety of physical activities in multiple environments that benefit the healthy development of the whole person” (PHE Canada, 2014)

# Physical Literacy Overview



Helps to develop:

- self-confidence
- self-esteem
- decision making skills
- anticipatory skills

(Whitehead, 2001)

# Physical Literacy Overview

## Settings:

- Physical education class
- Elite sport
- Recreational sport
- ***Neighborhood***
- ***Community centers***



# Project Details

- Six African American women aged 49-64 years
- Focus group interview (120 minutes)
- Semi-structured individual interviews (45-155 minutes)
  - What does [community center] mean to you?
  - What were your experiences at [community center] playground?

# Theme 1: Safe spaces

- Relationship with community center leader
- Opportunities for participation
- Relationship with community center members



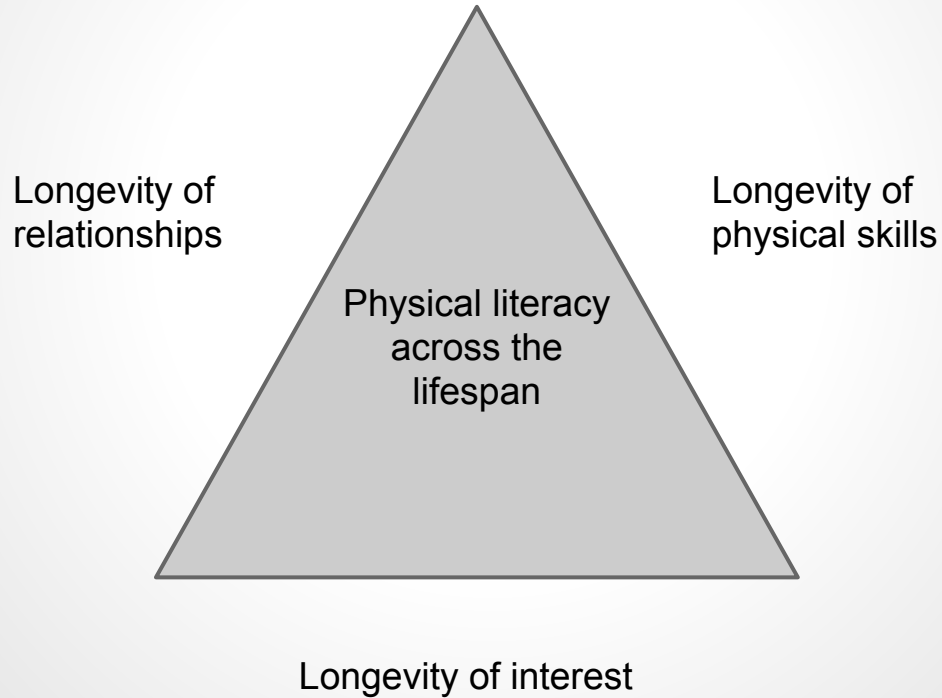
“You know the other thing that I think was unique was that [community center]...prior to the passage of Title IX they had this...year full of athletics for girls. And umm I don't know how many places that could boast about that.”

# Theme 2: Unstructured play

- Space to learn about movement
- Play defined by participants
- Opportunities to solve problems

“You know we’d just go out...in a field and we would take...whatever we could find for the bases especially...when we would play softball, we would just take whatever we could grab. We might take somebody’s shirt off and use that for first base...or take someone’s hat and use it for second base.”

# Theme 3: Physical literacy across lifespan



“It’s [participation in sports] just an invaluable experience...it’s something I’ve tried to instill in my children. I take them to the university events....So I’m trying to instill that in my children - what has been an experience for me...having those experiences, being able to share those with your kids is invaluable today.”

# Conclusions

1. Results align with Bronfenbrenner's (1977) framework of the importance of multiple ecological systems
2. Results indicate the “place” of physical activity matters for developing physical literacy
3. Future research needs to address the the development of physical literacy outside of the physical education settings, especially with diverse and marginalized groups

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