



Study Findings: Perceptions of Online Fitness Programming - Powercord Members

- Interviews were conducted with members of the Powercord program at the Brock-Niagara Centre for Health and Well-Being (BNC) to understand experiences and perceptions of online fitness programming
- Interviews were conducted during the closure of face-to-face programming due to COVID-19 lockdowns
- Seven individuals with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) participated in the study:

Pseudonym	Gender	Online member	Age (years)	Ethnicity	Interview method	Interview length (minutes: seconds)
Katie	Female	Yes	49	Caucasian	Phone	44:38
Samantha	Female	Yes	65	Caucasian	Lifeseize	38:16
Amanda	Female	No	36	Caucasian	Phone	22:36
Marla	Female	Yes	61	Caucasian	Lifeseize	51:07
Rachel	Female	Yes	63	Caucasian	Phone	44:47
Ross	Male	Yes	66	Caucasian	Lifeseize	44:52
Joanne	Female	No	45	Caucasian	Phone	46:39

Three main themes emerged from the data collected in the interviews:



1) Accessibility

- Participants described increased accessibility to exercise, specifically a reduction in transportation and scheduling barriers, associated with the online programming.
- Barriers to accessibility were also articulated including decreased access to specialized equipment and physical support.

2) Technology



- Perceptions of technology (positive and negative) were strongly impacted by previous experiences and attitudes using online platforms.
- Perceptions of technology influenced participants' decisions to join and continue using the online membership.

3) Community



- The perceived importance, and sense of community at the BNC impacted participants' experiences and motivation to engage in the online exercise programming.
- In comparison to face-to-face programs, social experiences were hindered; however online fitness programming offered more social opportunities than having no online options.

- Online fitness programming offered several benefits for participants, particularly in relation to dealing with COVID-19 restrictions
- Online programming did not appear to be a comparable replacement of face-to-face exercise programming for individuals with MS.

"it just isn't real"