



Integrating Inspiring, Innovative Health Programming Into Your Programs





Learning Objectives

- Learn how one parks and recreation agency created and nurtured two innovative mental health and well-being programs to share wellness messages within their community.
- Learn how to recognize signs within your communities of mental health first aid and other health program needs and how to inspire and innovate programs to serve the needs in your community.
- Learn how to foster a culture of mental health and healthcare provider partners, to ensure that your innovative program is facilitated by true “subject matter experts” in their field of expertise.





How does an agency innovate?

- Before one can innovate, an agency must first ***actively listen*** to its community.
- How did Port St. Lucie Parks & Recreation (PSLPRD) create such innovative programs?





Beginning in 2014, our Department began receiving multiple requests for programs and trainers to assist in slowing the progression of Parkinson's Disease, via exercise.





What is Parkinson's Disease?

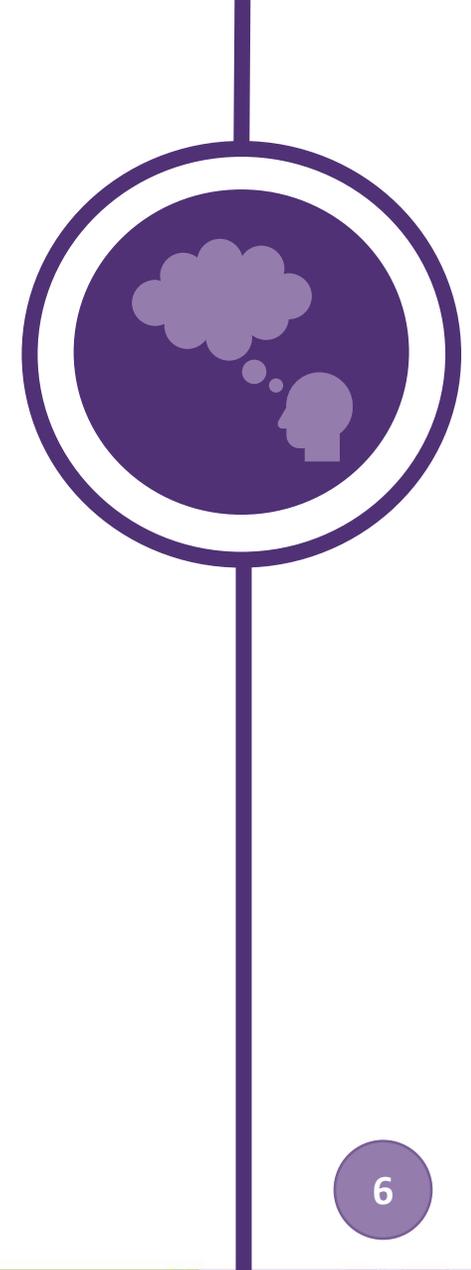
- A degenerative disease of the central nervous system, affecting **1 million** in the U.S. alone.
- Patients range in age from **30's** to **90's**, with most symptoms diagnosed after **50**.
- Common symptoms include **tremors, rigidity of muscles, impaired balance,** and **changes in speech.**
- Parkinson's Disease currently has **no cure.**





Meeting a community need

- PSLPRD staff began **researching** ways to train those diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease.
- Staff would discover a proven, certified program called **Rock Steady Boxing**, which would prove to be exactly what the community needed.





Rock Steady Boxing

- Founded in 2006 by **Scott C. Newman**.
- Newman began boxing following his diagnosis of onset Parkinson's at 40. Through his training he noticed **daily improvement** to health, agility, and daily functioning.
- Rock Steady Boxing (**RSB**) was created as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit.
- RSB features **certified programs** for patients of all levels of Parkinson's Disease.





A proven, effective approach

- Studies at Cleveland Clinic shows that such intense, “forced” exercise may **slow the progression** of Parkinson’s.
- Additional studies at the University of Indianapolis reveal that boxing therapy for Parkinson’s patients shows **increased** levels of **function, balance** and **walking** improvement when compared to other forms of exercise.





“By forcing the body to do what the brain can’t control, boxing challenges the brain to create new circuits which leads to neuroplasticity.”



Roberta Marongiu
Assistant Professor
Weill Cornell Medicine, New York City



How does the program work?

- Boxing **may** seem counterintuitive given documented research showing the increased risk of Parkinson's after head trauma.
- RSB “fighters” participate in **training** exercises, rather than fighting each other.
- By focusing efforts on building strength, developing foot work, coordinating hitting of a coach's mitts, and even yelling, the boxing practice provides a basis to **lessen symptoms**.





Bringing RSB to Port St. Lucie

- PSLPRD staff proposed the program to City management and Council. Approval was given to send two staff members to Indianapolis for **certification** in the RSB program.
- Once certified, PSLPRD offered three one-hour classes a week, at a **\$50/month** cost per participant. Currently, membership fees are not covered by any medical insurance plans.





A program changing lives

- Since its launch in January 2019, RSB has seen **100** participants in the program.
- **Half** of our current roster of “fighters” are **original members, still fighting** the fight against Parkinson’s.
- A **waitlist** is maintained due to the overwhelming popularity and need for the program in our community.







“After the diagnosis, I was lost on what to do next. RSB [is] a nurturing environment for both my physical and emotional wellbeing. You will be amazed at the difference it can make.”



RSB Fighter
Port St. Lucie, Florida



How does an agency innovate?

- Annual Community Input Survey (CIS)
- Annual meeting with PSLPRD programmers to analyze CIS results and incorporate into ongoing planning
- Annual meeting to evaluate current programs to *develop and address the program lifecycle* (per CAPRA standards)





What did our 2020 survey responses say?



- **82%** of respondents felt their personal priorities had changed as a result of COVID-19.





What did our 2020 survey responses say?



- **64%** of respondents indicated that their health (physical and mental) had changed.





Mental Health continues to be a priority among communities. Park and Recreation professionals are poised to be the critical connector to enhance the lives of those in their communities.





What did our 2020 survey responses say?

- Having heard from our community, PSLPRD made significant efforts to bring **mental health programming** to our community.





Mental health impacts of COVID-19

- **70%** of Americans report the economy is a source of stress (APA).
- **One in three** Americans have displayed signs of anxiety, depression, or both since the pandemic began.
- **One in five** Americans report a physical reaction when thinking about the pandemic.
- **18%** of Americans reported experiencing anxiety all or most of the time in the past week (Pew).





Mental health impacts of COVID-19

- Text messages to the federal disaster distress hotline increased **1,000%** in 2020.
- Psychological casualties outnumber physical casualties by **four to one.**





HealthyU

- A PSLPRD program connecting park and recreation programming, services, facilities and parks with those in our community who may be experiencing mental health issues.



HealthyU

Sessions are free, and available in-person for the first 50 who call to register. Each session will be available via Zoom.

A Series of Conversations

DEPRESSION - Wednesday, November 18, 2020, from 6:30-8 p.m.

Main Presenter: Anne Posey, Assistant Administrator, Behavioral Health Center, Cleveland Clinic Indian River Hospital

ANXIETY - Wednesday, December 9, 2020, from 6:30-8 p.m.

Main Presenter: Dr. Agnieszka W. Marshall, Psy.D., CAP, Director of Prevention Services, Tykes and Teens

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE - Friday, January 8, 2021, from 6:30-8 p.m.

Main Presenter: Monique Coleman, Prevention Coordinator, Tykes and Teens
Panelist: Dr. Agnieszka W. Marshall, Psy.D., CAP, Director of Prevention Services, Tykes and Teens

TRAUMA INFORMED CARE - Friday, February 12, 2021, from 6:30-8 p.m.

Main Presenter: Dr. Agnieszka W. Marshall, Psy.D., CAP, Director of Prevention Services, Tykes and Teens

SUICIDE PREVENTION - Friday, March 12, 2021, from 6:30-8 p.m.





How HealthyU began

- Personal loss of son Danny to 2018 opioid overdose.
- Increase in drug incidents in PSLPRD parks (**58** between 2015 and 2019).
- Early 2019, PSLPRD launched an **Opioid Epidemic Awareness** training to all staff.





How HealthyU grew

- PSLPRD opioid trainings proved highly successful and impactful.
- City management and HR requested expanding the trainings to include all City staff.
- These trainings brought awareness of the opioid epidemic to our more than **1,000** City staff members in late 2019.





How HealthyU grew

- City management then supported the further expansion of the program to include members of the public.
- The Opioid Epidemic Public Forum was first held in January 2020, before COVID-19 began to affect our area.
- The second Public Forum was held in August 2020, via live streaming, due to COVID-19 protocols.





How HealthyU grew

- With continued success of this program, PSLPRD expanded its mental health programming efforts.
- **HealthyU: A Series of Conversations** was then born.
- The program features a monthly forum, focusing on a single mental health topic, featuring presentations and discussion by subject matter experts.





How do we ensure SMEs lead our mental health programming?

- Develop partnerships with local/regional mental health experts. PSLPRD sought partnerships with:
 - Cleveland Clinic – Martin Health, and other healthcare providers
 - Tykes & Teens
 - Council On Aging
 - PFLAG
 - ARC
 - Local law enforcement





HealthyU 2020/2021 topics

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Domestic Violence
- Trauma Informed Care
- Suicide Prevention
- Opioid Epidemic Awareness
- Bullying
- Gender Violence
- Dementia
- Eating Disorders
- Stress Management
- Bipolar Effective Disorder
- And many more





HealthyU's future

- The HealthyU brand would go on to be expanded to include additional related programs:
 - Mental Health Awareness Month
 - International Overdose Awareness Day event
 - Life Raft



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2022 Mental Health Awareness Month

In conjunction with May is Mental Health Awareness Month, the City of Port St Lucie's Parks & Recreation Department will host an instructor-led walk and 7 yoga classes, which are offered FREE to the public in May.

Participants should bring their own yoga mat, water, blanket or beach towel to use during yoga class.

HealthyU's future

- 2021 May is Mental Health Month:
 - Included **nine** free outdoor programs in City parks.
 - **Two** guided walks on City trails and **seven** Yoga classes in City parks.
 - Met the needs of our community as **hundreds** sought mental health needs through outdoor recreation.

Saturday May 14 9-10 a.m. Instructor-led Walk - 1.27 miles
Woodstork Trail
1957 SE Hillmoor Drive, Port St. Lucie, FL 34952



Thursday May 5 6-7 p.m.
Yoga Class
The Saints Golf Course
2601 SE Morningside Blvd., Port St. Lucie, FL 34952

Saturday May 21 6:30-8 p.m.
Forest Bathing
The Botanical Gardens
2410 SE Westmoreland Blvd., Port St. Lucie, FL 34952

Saturday May 7 9-10 a.m.
Yoga Class
Woodland Trails Park
1485 SW Calmar Ave., Port St. Lucie, FL 34953

Thursday May 26 6-7 p.m.
Yoga Class
Veterans Park at Rivergate
2200 SE Veterans Memorial Parkway, Port St. Lucie, FL 34952
In the shaded grassy area near the pavilion



Thursday May 12 6-7 p.m.
Yoga Class
Veterans Park at Rivergate
2200 SE Veterans Memorial Parkway, Port St. Lucie, FL 34952
In the shaded grassy area near the pavilion

Saturday May 28 9-10 a.m.
Brain Fitness
Woodland Trails Park
1485 SW Calmar Avenue, Port St. Lucie, FL 34953

Thursday May 19 6-7 p.m.
Yoga Class





HealthyU's future

- International Overdose Awareness Day:
 - Seeks to create a better understanding of overdose, reduce the stigma of drug-related deaths, and create change that reduce harms associated with drug use
 - Held Tuesday, **August 31**, 2021 at 7 p.m. along the Boardwalk at The Port



TIME TO REMEMBER. TIME TO ACT.
Tuesday, Aug. 31, 2021, at 7 p.m.

Join the City of Port St. Lucie Parks & Recreation Department for an overdose awareness remembrance ceremony. The evening will begin with a candlelight procession along The Boardwalk at The Port, near the banyan tree, just south of Botanical Gardens. This 90-minute event will include music, light refreshments and a reading of names of loved ones who have died from drug overdose.

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Participants are welcome to bring an old pair of shoes, sandals or boots to leave on display commemorating those we have lost. Afterwards, items will be donated to Salvation Army for those in need.





HealthyU's future

- International Overdose Awareness Day:
 - Featured a candlelight processional along the boardwalk, live classical guitarist, light refreshments and a reading of the names of those lost to drug overdose.



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HealthyU's future

- International Overdose Awareness Day:
 - PSLPRD is proud to join in this global movement for understanding, compassion and change.
 - In 2019, there were **97** similar events, held in **39** countries worldwide.
 - Last year, amid COVID-19, the world held **602** events.



INTERNATIONAL OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY

In partnership with **HealthyU**

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HealthyU's future

- Life Raft:
 - A designated fitness program for those in Substance Use Disorder recovery.
 - Led by fitness staff.
 - Data supports that exercise provides people with increased feelings of self-worth and self-confidence.

Life Raft is a fitness program specifically designed for individuals in substance use disorder recovery programs.

LIFE RAFT

\$10
PER MONTH

HUMANA FITNESS & WELLNESS CENTER
AT THE MIDFLORIDA EVENT CENTER

Life Raft is offered in an open and welcoming environment for those seeking physical, social and mental well-being while in recovery.

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TUESDAYS & THURSDAYS



HealthyU's future

- Life Raft:
 - A low-cost (**\$10/month**) program featuring bi-weekly sessions to those enrolled in and referred by a recognized recovery program.
 - “Judgment-free” environment with the **support** of others on the same recovery journey.

Life Raft is a fitness program specifically designed for individuals in substance use disorder recovery programs.

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TUESDAYS & THURSDAYS



Key lessons via HealthyU

- **Depression** is one of the most common mental health disorders.
- Depression can be caused by **genetic, biological, environmental** and **psychological** factors.
- **Stigma** prevents people from seeking the help they need.
- Stress exists in three forms: **positive, tolerable** and **toxic**.
- **Anxiety** is the most common mental health disorder.





Key lessons via HealthyU

- **Food** is the most abused anxiety drug.
- Selfcare is not selfish...it is **necessary**.
- **One in four** women and **one in nine** men experience severe physical violence from an intimate partner.
- The first **72** hours after a domestic violence incident are the most dangerous because the batterer is looking for the victim.
- **One in 15** children are exposed to intimate partner violence each year.





Key lessons via HealthyU

- Shift the perspective from “**what’s wrong with you**” to “**what happened to you**”.
- **Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)** are the single greatest public health threat.
- ACEs are categorized by **abuse, household dysfunction** and **neglect**.
- **68%** of Americans have experienced one or more ACE.
- **26%** have experienced three or more ACEs.





Key lessons via HealthyU

- Every **16.6** minutes, someone intentionally ends their life.
- Suicide is the **second** leading cause of death in college students, and the **third** leading cause in youth overall.
- **20%** of people will have a suicide in their immediate family.
- **60%** will know someone personally who dies by suicide.
- Myth: Suicidal people are fully intent on dying.
- Fact: Most suicidal people are **undecided** about living or dying (called **suicidal ambivalence**).





Key lessons via HealthyU

- Myth: Men are more likely to be suicidal.
- Fact: Men **complete** suicide more than women, but women **attempt** suicide more than men (by a factor of three).
- Myth: Suicide occurs in greater numbers around the year-end holidays.
- Fact: The highest suicide rates are in **April**.





Key lessons via HealthyU

- Port St. Lucie reported a **41.9%** increase in opioid-related overdoses between 2019 and 2020.
- Port St. Lucie reported a near **13%** increase of opioid overdose fatalities between 2019 and 2020.
- Port St. Lucie Police Department (PSLPD) reported a **218.2%** increase in the use of Narcan between 2019 and 2020.





What did our 2021 survey responses say?



- **82%** of respondents indicated their social and mental health are currently **excellent** or **very good**.



What did our 2021 survey responses say?



- **53%** of respondents indicated a desire to introduce **support groups** to the HealthyU program.





What did our 2021 survey responses say?



- **88%** of respondents indicated a desire to introduce a HealthyU program specific to **invisible illnesses**.





What did our 2021 survey responses say?

- Having heard from our community, PSLPRD made significant efforts to bring **support groups** to our community.





Support Groups

- PSLPRD has partnered with NAMI to provide free weekly support groups focused on mental health.
- NAMI's certified specialists moderate the Groups to ensure a safe, private sharing environment.
- Groups are limited to a maximum of **15** attendees to ensure a comfortable sharing environment.

2022 HealthyU

A Series of
Conversations



Weekly on Tuesdays.
Starting Tuesday, Feb. 1, 2022, from 2-3:30 p.m.

In partnership with Healthy U: A Series of Conversations, the National Alliance on Mental Illness will be holding weekly NAMI Connections Support Groups at the Port St. Lucie Community Center.

*Support groups are limited to a maximum of 15 attendees.
If you wish to attend or have any questions,
contact Kimberly Comer at kimberlyc64@att.net or 630-677-3108.*





HealthyU 2022 topics

- Gender Violence / Human Trafficking
- Domestic Violence
- Down Syndrome
- The Autism Spectrum
- Trauma Informed Care
- LGBTQ+
- Dementia
- Opioid Epidemic Awareness
- Suicide Prevention
- Bullying
- Depression
- Anxiety





PSLPRD's success

- NRPA **2019 Innovation in Health Award** for Rock Steady Boxing.
- NRPA **2019 Best in Innovation Award** for Rock Steady Boxing.
- FRPA **2020 Innovative Programming: Health Award** for Opioid Epidemic Trainings/Forums.
- FRPA **2021 Innovative Programming: Community Building Award** for HealthyU
- NRPA **2021 Innovation in Health Award** for HealthyU.





Learn to recognize community mental health needs and innovate programs to meet these needs!

PSLPRD programs:

- Memory Screenings
- May is Mental Health Month
- NAMI Connection Support Groups
- Life Raft





As park and recreation professionals, we serve our communities! To do that, we must pivot and innovate based on community needs.

Mental health programming ensures “we are all taking the time to talk” about mental, social and physical health needs.





Integrating Inspiring, Innovative Health Programming Into Your Programs

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