Integrating Wellness Goals into Personalized Care Pathways for Children and Youth with Disabilities

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BACKGROUND
• Little is known about how wellness is promoted or addressed in the context of children’s rehabilitation services.
• Research to date has focused on individual wellness dimensions (e.g., physical), with limited success in promoting overall well-being.

PURPOSE
• To explore what wellness means to children and youth with a range of disabilities, what goals are important to them, and how their needs are addressed in rehabilitative settings.

METHODS
• Conducted four ‘World Café’ style focus groups with three stakeholder groups: 1) youth with disabilities; 2) family members/caregivers of children/youth with disabilities; and 3) rehabilitation professionals who provide services to children and youth with disabilities.
• Recruited participants from Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital and Special Olympics Ontario.

RESULTS
Youth perspective:
• A sense of accomplishment, opportunities/exposure to activities, autonomy/choice, and social connection were important to their own wellness needs and goals.
• Having access to community services and personalized/tailored care was important to them when receiving wellness services.

Wellness for children and youth with disabilities means feeling a sense of accomplishment, having opportunities/exposure to activities, autonomy/choice, and social connections.

Healthcare provider (HCP) perspective:
• Supporting opportunities/exposure to activities, autonomy/choice, and making social connections were important for addressing wellness needs and goals of clients and families.
• Building capacity around wellness needs, following up with clients’ wellness priorities, engaging in interdisciplinary collaboration, and connecting clients with community services were important aspects of service provision.

KEY MESSAGES
• General consensus amongst youth, parents/caregivers, and HCPs on what wellness means, what wellness goals look like, and what services are important for wellness.
• Personalized wellness goals across multiple wellness dimensions should be co-created with clients, families, and HCPs, and incorporated more into programs at Holland Bloorview.
• HCPs need training and resources on how to address wellness in conversations with clients and families.

NEXT STEPS
• Our long-term objective is to co-create, implement, and evaluate a Toolkit for Wellness Promotion, which will include information and resources for young people with disabilities, their families and health care and community service providers.

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