



From Access to Inclusion

Social Inclusion is when resources and opportunities are equitably distributed to enable people to live comfortably, to take part in society and to feel that they are valued and respected members of the community.¹

“Inclusion is messy... It is not about bringing outsiders into the existing mainstream culture – it is about creating a new and negotiated culture together.”² (Shakir, 2004)

Social inclusion is both a way to engage people in active living, and it can also be a result of inclusive active living opportunities. So what is the difference between access and inclusion?

Access: the ability, right, or permission to approach, enter, speak with, or use; admittance.

Inclusion: the act of being included; being part of the whole.³

Both access and inclusion are important and valued. Access is a component of inclusion.

DIMENSIONS OF SOCIAL INCLUSION⁴

Active living may not end poverty, but it can mitigate some of the worst effects by promoting health and social connection. There are five ways to look at social inclusion.

Valuing Diversity

Recognizing and respecting diverse needs of individuals and groups. This includes:

- Meeting diverse needs through a variety of methods to ensure equal chances
- Not equating disability with pathology
- Respecting cultural and gender differences

Human Development

Nurturing the talents, skills, capacities and choices of citizens to live a life they value and to make a contribution both they and others find worthwhile. Examples include:

- Ability to exercise choice in a range of activities that suit different interests
- Learning and developmental opportunities for all people
- High quality instructors and equipment available for all programs and services
- Opportunities that enable people of all income levels to interact on a common level



A joint initiative of
BC Recreation and Parks
Association and the Heart
and Stroke Foundation of
BC & Yukon.



ActNowBC.ca

An initiative of these
BC Healthy Living Alliance
members



Involvement and Engagement

Having the right and the necessary support to make/be involved in decisions affecting oneself, family and community, and to be engaged in community life. Examples include:

- Participant engagement in planning and implementation of services and programs
- Opportunities for participant leadership development
- Citizen engagement in municipal policy decisions
- Political participation

Access to Services

Barrier free communities where services and opportunities are close by and participation is not reliant on material wealth. This includes:

- Local opportunities within walking distance from home
- Program and service participants that reflect neighbourhood demographics
- Communication strategies include channels aimed at marginalized community members
- Moving beyond “one size fits all” programs and services

Social Justice

Distribution of the social and economic resources of society for the benefit of all people to facilitate full participation in community life. This includes:

- Recognizing common worth of all community members
- Privacy, dignity and respect are valued
- Equitable measures are taken to ensure needs outside of mainstream society are met

POVERTY IS...

-
- 1** Not being able to afford a pair of proper shoes in order to walk 30 minutes a day.

 - 2** Knowing that I should be physically active, but feeling like I would not be accepted or welcomed by other people at the gym

 - 3** Not having a supportive friend to start and continue being active with.

 - 4** Being told by the doctor to get some exercise but not having the time and energy after working two jobs.

 - 5** Buying food at the convenience store because there's no grocery store in my neighbourhood.

 - 6** Not being able to tell anyone what I need to be more active.

 - 7** Having a free pass to swim, but not being able to use it because I can't pay for the bus, babysitting, a bathing suit or a lesson to learn how to swim.



Poverty and Inclusion

“Social and economic exclusion happens when people don’t have – and can’t get – the education, jobs, decent housing, health care, and other things they need to live comfortably, to participate in society, and to feel that they are valued and respected members of their community.

Social and economic inclusion reflects the need to address poverty and exclusion by including the voiceless and powerless in shaping the policies that affect their lives. It welcomes these individuals and groups into the planning, decision-making and policy-development processes in their community. And it empowers them by offering the opportunities, resources and support they need to participate.”⁵

What would socially inclusive active living look like?⁶

- Participation doesn’t rely on one’s ability to pay
- People have a choice in how and what they participate in
- All citizens are supported to participate in decision-making
- Public places and community resources are accessible
- Policies and practices value human rights, dignity and respect
- Systemic barriers do not hinder participation
- People feel a sense of belonging
- Equitable opportunities to participate are provided and valued
- Diverse needs are explored and intentionally addressed

Elements of socially inclusive active living opportunities⁷

Benefits of socially inclusive active living programs are maximized when they provide participants with the following:

- A safe environment (physically safe)
- Opportunities to develop and display competence (personally valued)
- Social networks (socially connected)
- Moral and economic support (morally and economically supported)
- Autonomy and control during experiences (personally and politically empowered)
- Hope for the future (hopeful about the future)

