

# Participatory Approaches to Advancing Trauma- and Violence Informed Physical Activity

Dr. Francine Darroch

Dr. Grace McKeon

Candace Roberts, PhD (c)

Nadine Simpson, MSc (c)

Anna Wilson



*presents:*

# Innovations in Addressing Gender-Based Violence and Trauma- and Violence-Informed Health Promotion

## *A NATIONAL CONFERENCE*

Oct 1–2, 2025

# This work is a collaborative effort



We want to extend our heartfelt gratitude to so many, including:

- The participants, collaborators, and community partners who make this research possible
- The organizations and supporters who share our vision for equity and innovation in physical activity research



**YWCA**  
**CRABTREE CORNER**

# Why is **physical activity** important?

- Physical *inactivity* is a significant public health issue in Canada
- Physical activity can improve overall mental health and decrease symptoms related to PTSD, depression, anxiety, and sleep disturbances
- **Physical activity is recognized as a critical mental health support**



# FOUR TENETS OF TVIPA

**Emphasis  
on safety**



**Strengths-  
based and  
capacity  
building  
approach**



**Foster choice  
and  
collaboration**



**Trauma  
awareness**

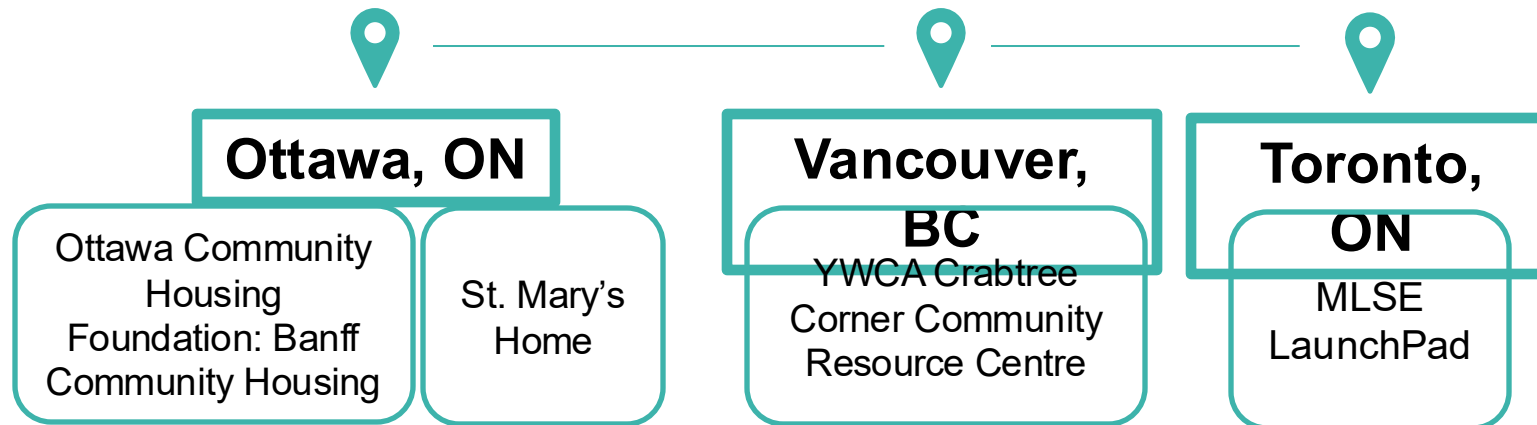




# TVIPA programming: Co-creation of community interventions

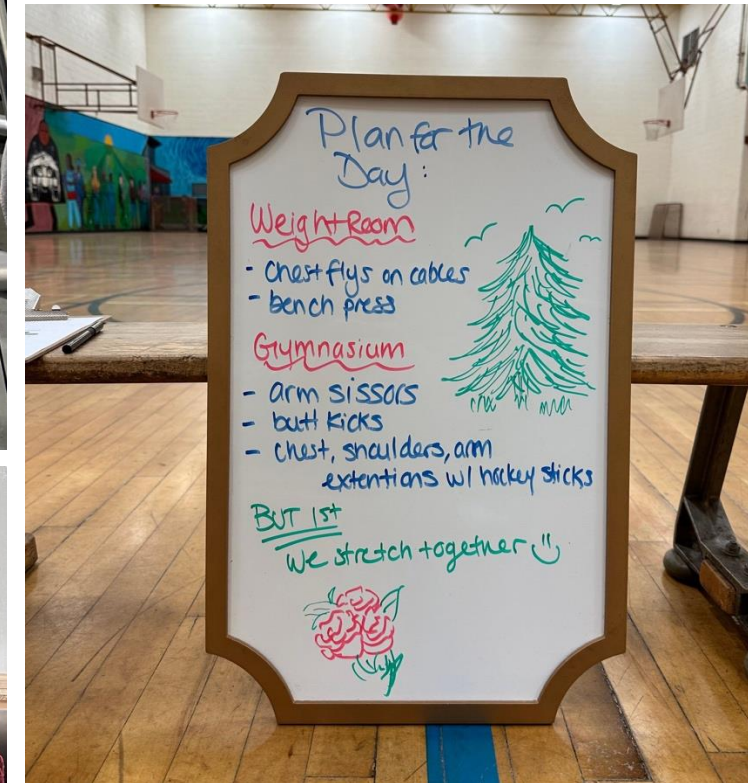
**Objective: to improve the quality of life of women and children who have experienced inequities**

- We co-created TVIPA programming with community members and local organizations from each site
- We co-launched programming with women who experience(d) social inequities, trauma, and structural violence



# TVIPA programming: Co-creation of community interventions

- 1 year of programming in blocks of 6-weeks
- A range of different activities offered (e.g., yoga, strength training, dance, walking)
- We hired physical activity trainers across all sites for the delivery of programs
- Additional considerations: equipment and gear (e.g., sports hijabs, sports bras), safe spaces & predictable programs and childcare



# Program participation

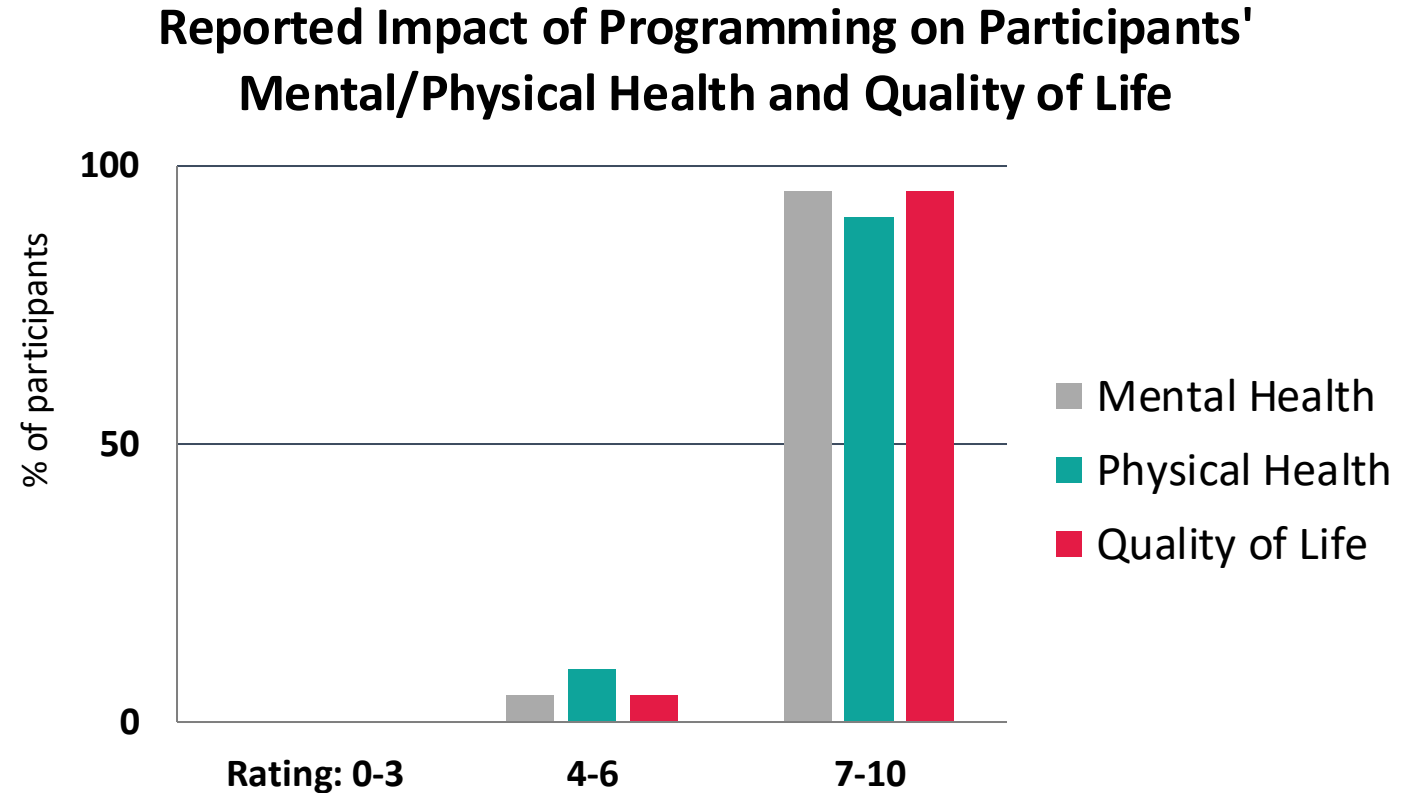
	All sites
Total attendees	168
Total times attended by non-research participants	379
Total times attended by research participants	1406
Total times attended by children	883
Total Attendance	2820





# Health, quality of life, and physical activity

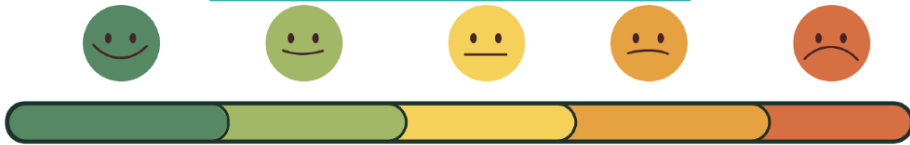
- On a sliding scale from 0-10, the women have reported improvements of either 7 or higher for all 3 measures:
  - n=108
  - Mental Health: 95.3%**
  - Physical Health: 90.6%**
  - Quality of Life: 93.1%**



# Pre/Post programming: Daily check-ins



How would you rate your mood?



- ☐ Very happy, calm, relaxed
- ☐ Somewhat happy, calm, relaxed
- ☐ Neither sad nor happy
- ☐ Somewhat sad, depressed, down
- ☐ Very sad, depressed, down

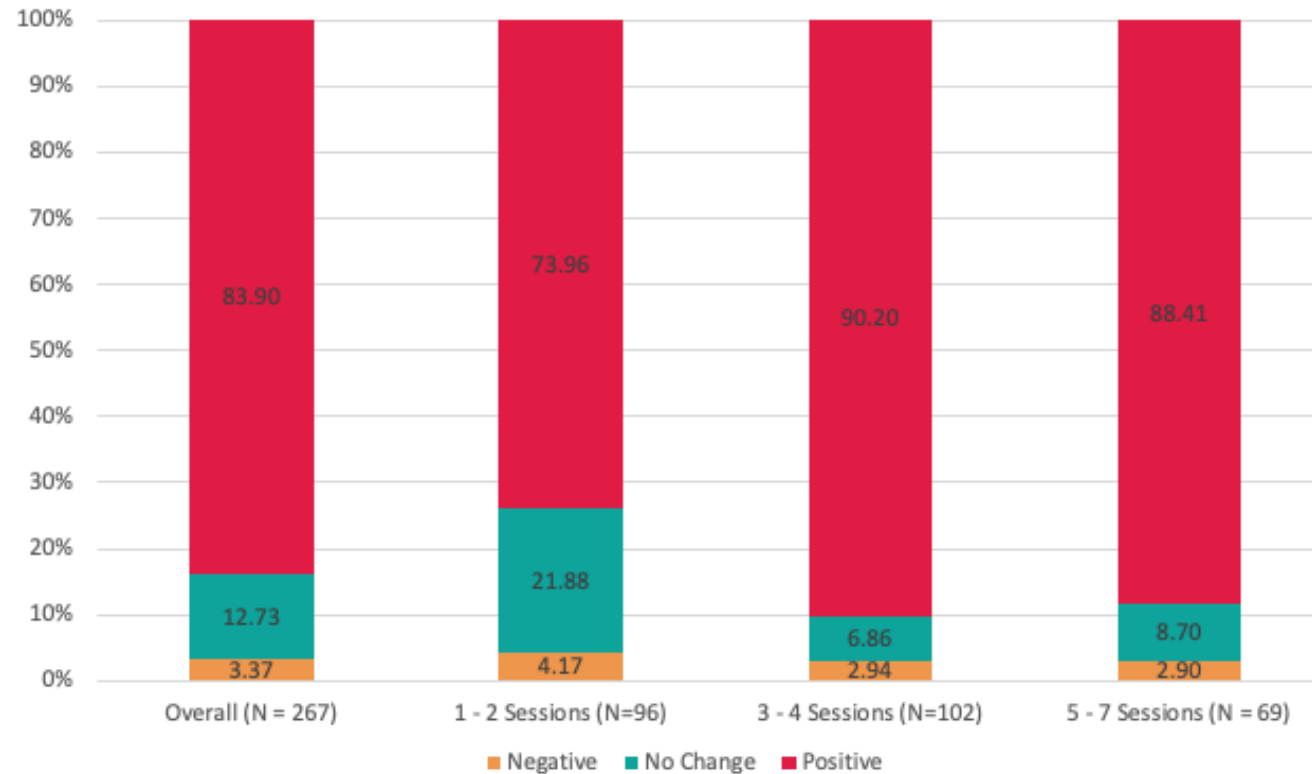


Overall, how do you feel after attending today's physical activity class?

- ☐ Much better
- ☐ Somewhat better
- ☐ About the same
- ☐ Somewhat worse
- ☐ Much worse
- ☐ Other (please describe):  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Pre/Post programming

## Mood







# Strengthening Strategies to Scale Up TVIPA

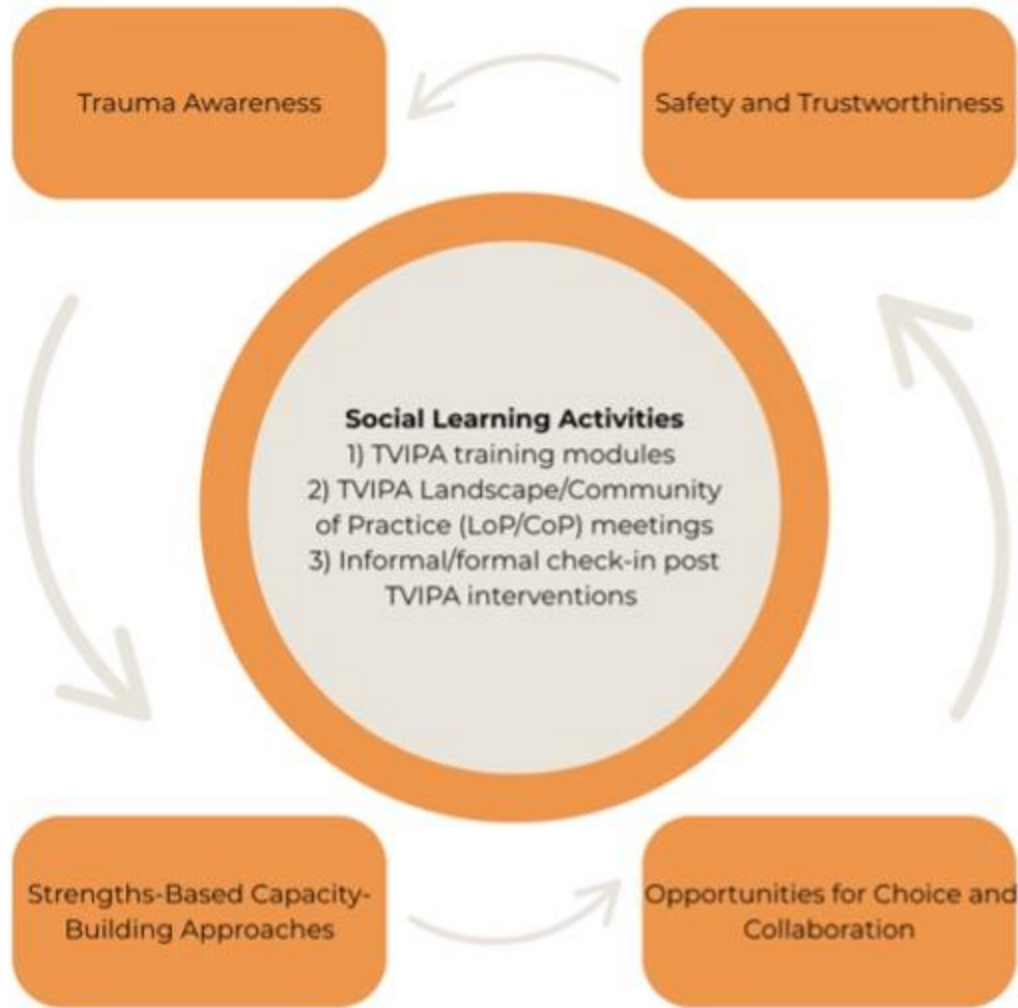
## Research Objective

To examine service providers' knowledge uptake, development, and implementation of TVIPA strategies for self-identified women



Service provider instructing dance class

# Intersectional Social Learning Theory & TVIPA



- **Social learning spaces:** Collaborative environments that support knowledge-sharing, reflection, and skill-building among service providers.
- **Intersectional Social Learning Theory:** Social learning theory and intersectionality underpin TVIPA by linking practice adaptation with equity and empowerment.

# **Social Learning Space Activities**



**Baseline Interviews  
with Service Providers**



**TVIPA Training  
Modules**



**TVIPA Landscape of  
Practice**



**Site-Specific TVIPA  
Programming Support**

# Research Findings

## ACCESS TO SHARED RESOURCES & TRAINING

Provide access to training modules and shared materials that reinforce fidelity to TVIPA tenets.

## PEER ENGAGEMENT & SUPPORT

Encourage peer-to-peer exchange of ideas and challenges to create environments that are supportive and collaborative to manage complex situations.

## CONSISTENT COMMUNICATION

Establish clear and consistent communication channels, ensuring some interactions are in-person.

## ENGAGED FACILITATOR

Ensure facilitators are actively engaged, maintaining interaction, and guiding trauma-informed practice.

## INTERSECTIONAL APPROACHES

Design spaces using an intersectional approach that invites participants to reflect on their own positionalities, and takes into account the diverse identities and social contexts of the people they engage.

## DIVERSE ENGAGEMENT

Ensure access to diverse avenues of engagement to support participation in the social learning space that suit individual schedules and preferences.



# Conclusion

The formal integration of **social learning spaces** are important for **enhancing research, learning outcomes**, and **empowering practitioners** across different disciplines to share knowledge.





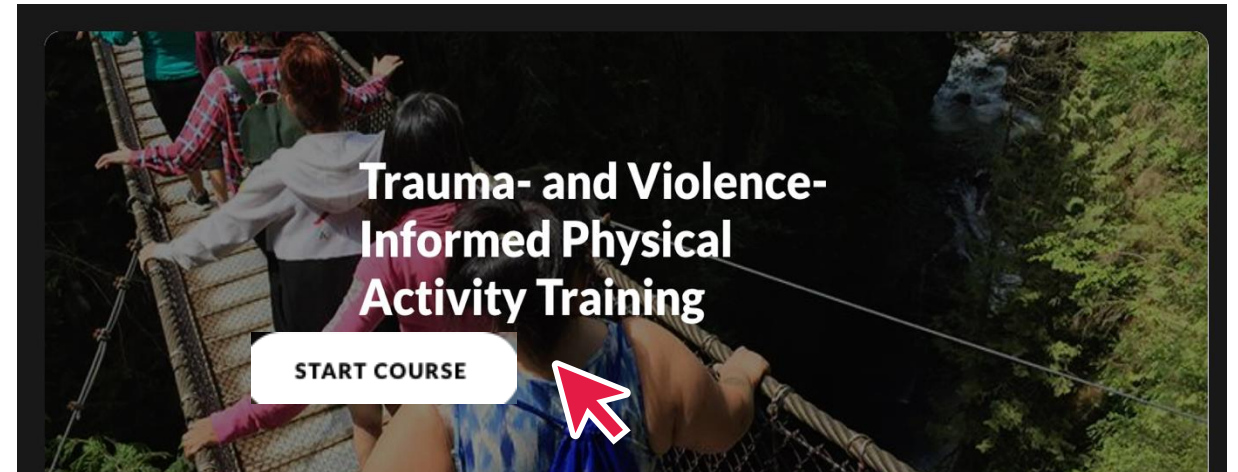




# Development and evaluation of online training modules



1. Collaborated with community partners, colleagues, and experts over a 12-month period
2. Conducted literature reviews
3. Content development
4. Collaborative review & revisions
5. Pilot and evaluate



## Module 1

- ✓ Utilize the learning system.
- ✓ Understand the **purpose** and **framework** of the module.

### The Warm Up



## Module 2

- ✓ Understand **gender-based violence** and family violence and its connection to sport.
- ✓ Define PA, including leisure time physical activity and recognize its benefits.
- ✓ Apply the tenets of **TVIPA**.

### The Starting Line



## Module 3

- ✓ Understand the impacts of **trauma** on the brain, body, and behaviour.
- ✓ Recognize how PA can support **mental health** and recovery.
- ✓ Define **vicarious trauma**, identify its sources and effects, and develop strategies for seeking support.

### Raising the Bar



## Module 4

- ✓ **Apply** TVIPA approaches in training, coaching, and instructing.
- ✓ Recognize the role of **language**, tone, and messaging
- ✓ Distinguish between invitational and commanding language
- ✓ Explore 6 diverse **case studies**.

### The Game Plan



## Module 5

- ✓ Understand how 3 diverse **physical activity programs** apply a TVI approach to physical activity programming.

### TVIPA in Motion



## Module 6

- ✓ Explore **additional resources** and an FAQ section.

### The Cool Down





# Trauma, the Body, and Movement



Alt text: Two road barriers are present in front of stairs leading to a door titled 'physical activity' above. Each stair is labelled with a different form of oppression representing barriers to physical activity. A diverse individual is dressed in active wear and stands on the stairs blowing a whistle.

- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a mental health condition that is brought on by a traumatic event
- Symptoms of PTSD can create barriers to participating and engaging in regular physical activity and movement
- Individuals who are diagnosed with PTSD are less likely to engage in physical activity and more likely to be sedentary than individuals without PTSD, despite physical activity being vitally important to supporting mental wellness

Lesson 32 of 40

## Prezidential Basketball



Photo: <https://www.unhcr.ca/news/lifting-sports-young-athletes-helping-them-find-motivation-amid-racial-justice/>



Basketball as a tool to empower youth



Photo: <https://ottawasportspages.ca/2022/10/14/former-basketball-pro-manock-lual-happy-to-see-communities-come-together-to-help-youth-from-low-income-families/>

# Rate a Gym or Community Centre

## 10 Ways to Rate the Accessibility of a Physical Activity Organization



You can use this worksheet to assess a local organization using the 10 key values below. Rate the organization, where 0 = "does not meet this value" and 10 = "fully meets this value". Feel free to write any other comments or observations you have.

1

### It is used by women in the neighbourhood.

One way to tell if an organization is accessible is by looking at the people that use it. Do you know women who go here? Would you feel comfortable bringing friends or family here?



2

### It is inexpensive or free.

Cost can be an issue when trying to participate in physical activities. For people with low income, it is important for there to be affordable options. Would someone with low income be able to go here? Are there options to help make it more affordable for someone?



3

### Employees are approachable and helpful.

Getting comfortable with an environment can often be supported by asking questions. Are there friendly employees available to answer questions or who approach you about getting to know the place? Tone of voice as well as body and facial expressions can have a strong impact on how welcome you feel.



4

### Signs are easily understood.

Images and text can be helpful in learning where things are or how to use them. Is the language used on signs or visual materials easy to understand? Do images show directions clearly? Are they translated in multiple languages?



5

### Values of respect and diversity are highly prevalent.

It is important that an organization supports and welcomes all people. This can be shown in different ways: sometimes posters can describe values or perhaps employees make sure to communicate them. Do you feel like values of welcomeness, respect, and diversity are expressed?



# How effective is trauma- and violence-informed physical activity (TVIPA) training for service providers?

McKeon G, Roberts C, McGaughey T, Smith S, Winnicki J & Darroch F  
Journal of Physical Activity & Health, <https://doi.org/10.1123/jpah.2025-0264>

## Why it matters

Trauma and violence can lead to depression, anxiety, PTSD & chronic pain.

Physical activity can help, yet most service providers lack the training to support clients.



To evaluate the feasibility, acceptability and effectiveness of online, co-designed TVIPA training modules

## Who participated?

**205**

participants took part in the **training**

**>75%**

completed the **follow-up questionnaire**

**Diverse group of professions**

including exercise instructors, allied health professionals and students, and community service providers.

## So what changed?



### Pre-post training evaluation

Significant improvements in both **knowledge about** and **confidence to apply** TVIPA



### Other findings

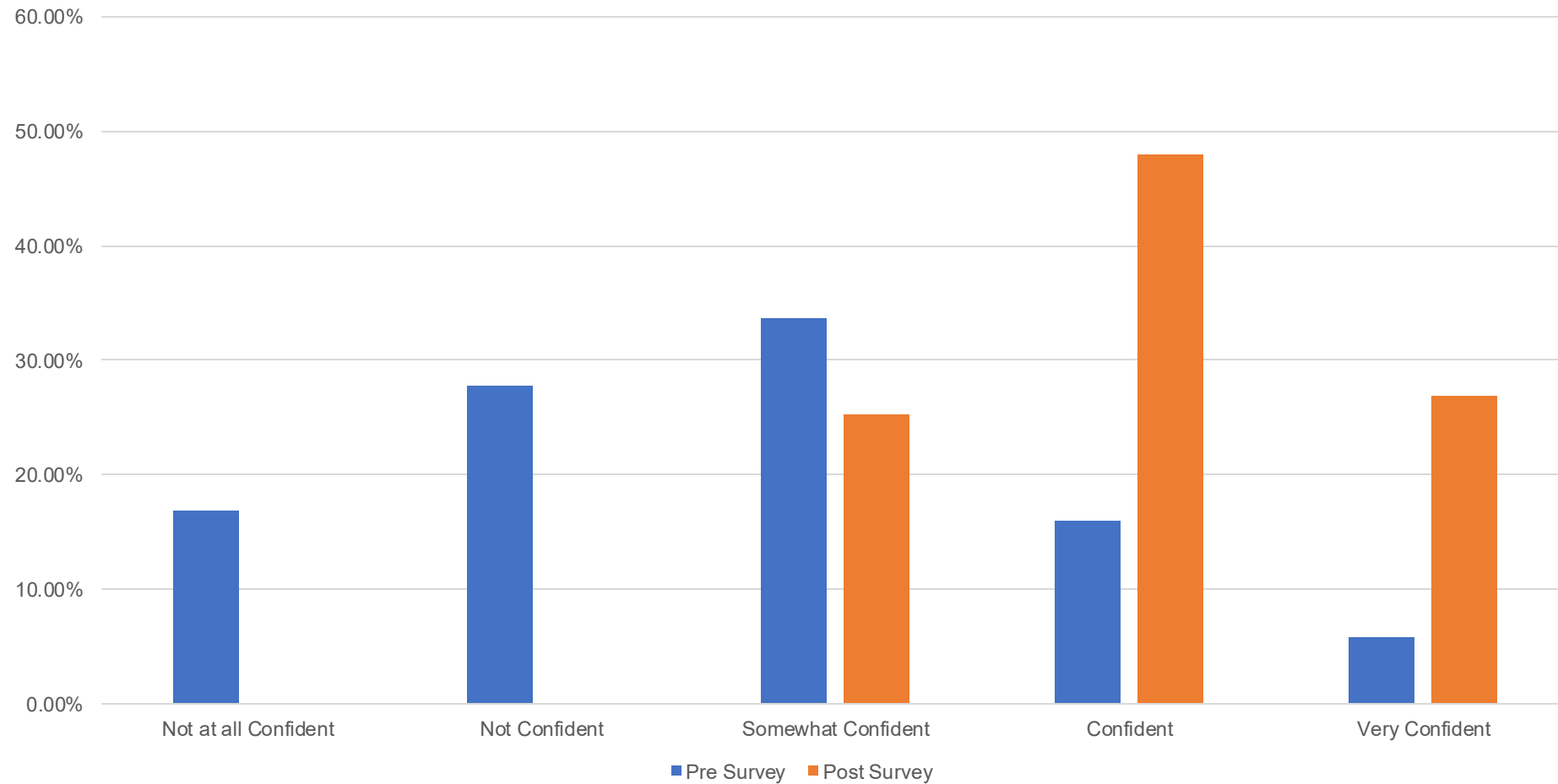
Greater perceived impact seen at the individual level than organisational level, which will require more time, resources, supportive leadership, & ongoing training



### 6-month post-training interviews

Participants reported using more **inclusive language**, adapting physical spaces for **safety**, and increased **understanding** of barriers to participation

### Pre-/post-training change in confidence in **applying** TVIPA



$\chi^2$  (16, N=121) = 25.93,  $p < 0.001$

# Sustainability Phase and Evaluation

## Fidelity Checklists

**Interviews:** Adoption, Implementation, Sustainability

**Ottawa, ON**

**Ottawa Community  
Housing Foundation:  
Banff Community  
Housing**

**St. Mary's  
Home**

**Vancouver, BC**

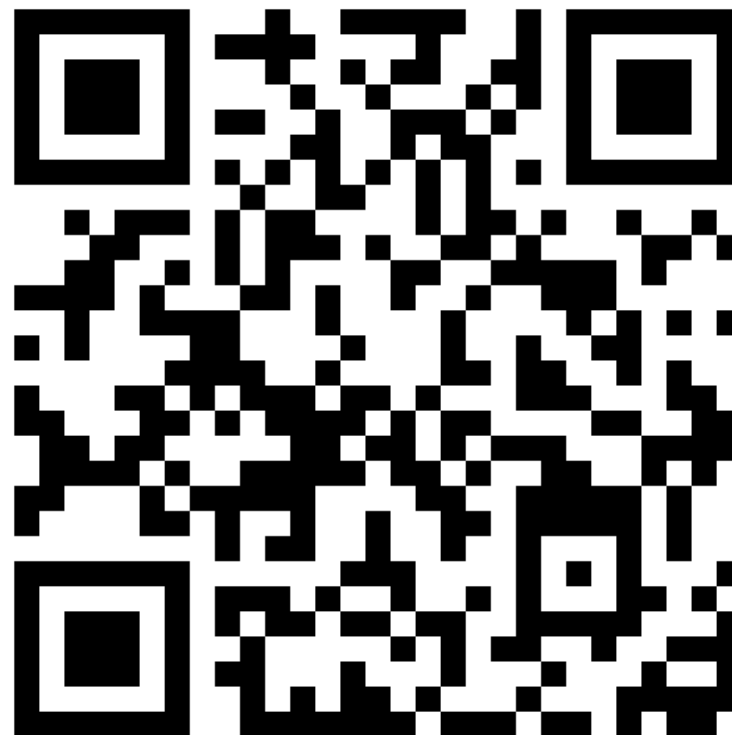
**YWCA Crabtree Corner  
Community Resource  
Centre**

Site:	Facilitator:	Completed by:	Program week/block:
Key element		Completed Yes/No/Partially	Comments/additional notes
<b>1. Welcome and Introduction</b>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Describe the mood of the room? (Calm, excited, busy, tense, is there nervous laughter, is there awkward silence?)</li></ul>
Participants welcomed		Y / N / P	
Time allowed for participants to settle in and socialize		Y / N / P	
Room set up appropriately and food provided		Y / N / P	
<b>2. The facilitator explained the following key points of the Program:</b>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Do the participants appear comfortable? Note language / words being used</li><li>Note the ways in which participants and facilitators interact?</li></ul>
Overview of the class structure provided		Y / N / P	
Facilitator encouraged participants to move at their own pace		Y / N / P	
Facilitator encouraged participants to decide how they would like to participate and to take breaks whenever they like		Y / N / P	
<b>3. Session Activities</b>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Do the participants appear comfortable? Note language / words being used</li><li>Note the ways in which participants and facilitators interact?</li></ul>
At least 45 min of exercise is delivered		Y / N / P	
Facilitator demonstrated and participated in the activity		Y / N / P	
Modifications are offered to suit different participant needs		Y / N / P	
Childcare and/or youth programming offered		Y / N / P	
<b>4. Participants</b>			



# *Reclaiming Recreation: The Banff-Ledbury Community*

Follow along by scanning the QR code!





## Reclaiming Recreation: The Banff-Ledbury Community

Advocating for increased recreation access  
within the boundaries of the community to  
improve intergenerational health and wellbeing.



**May, 2024.**

“ Access to recreation is limited in the community because of where we're located and how we're mostly isolated recreationally. ”

Community Member & Parent

## Banff-Ledbury is considered a Recreation Desert.



**A recreation desert is an area where there are very limited accessible, appropriate, and affordable recreation opportunities for community members.**

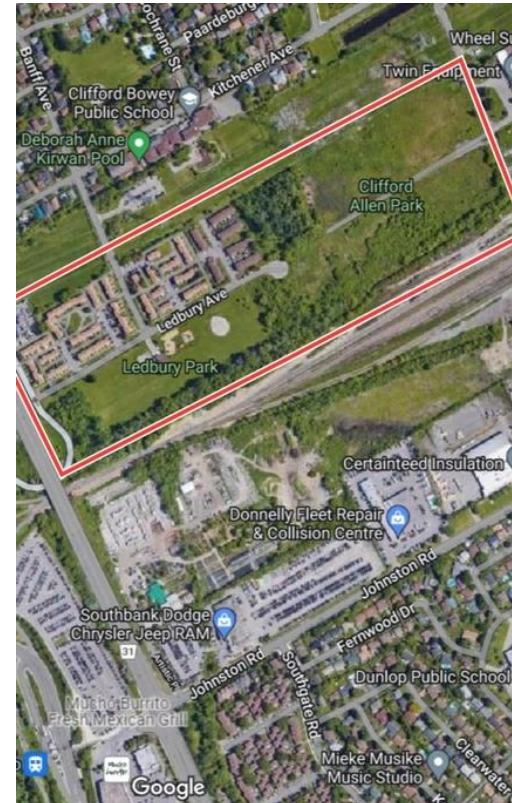
One challenge Banff-Ledbury faces when advocating for recreation is how it's perceived from a bird's eye view.

On the right, we see a satellite image of the Banff-Ledbury community. The community bounds are highlighted using the red border. From this perspective, there is green space, a nearby transitway, a pool, and even a community center. However, this does not accurately reflect recreation access.

— “ —

*So this neighbourhood is kind of like a little island [...] on the South side we have this beautiful park but then on the other side of that park is train tracks that children can't cross..*

— ” —



## The inaccessibility of public transit creates challenges for recreation access:



Limits the use of **public or active transportation** for accessing recreation programs or centres outside of the Banff-Ledbury community



Isolates **recreational activities** like biking, walking, running, or skateboarding to the boundaries of the community

## Safety

The Banff community faces significant mobility challenges, particularly on the west side where an eight-lane Bank Street with a bridge poses safety concerns.

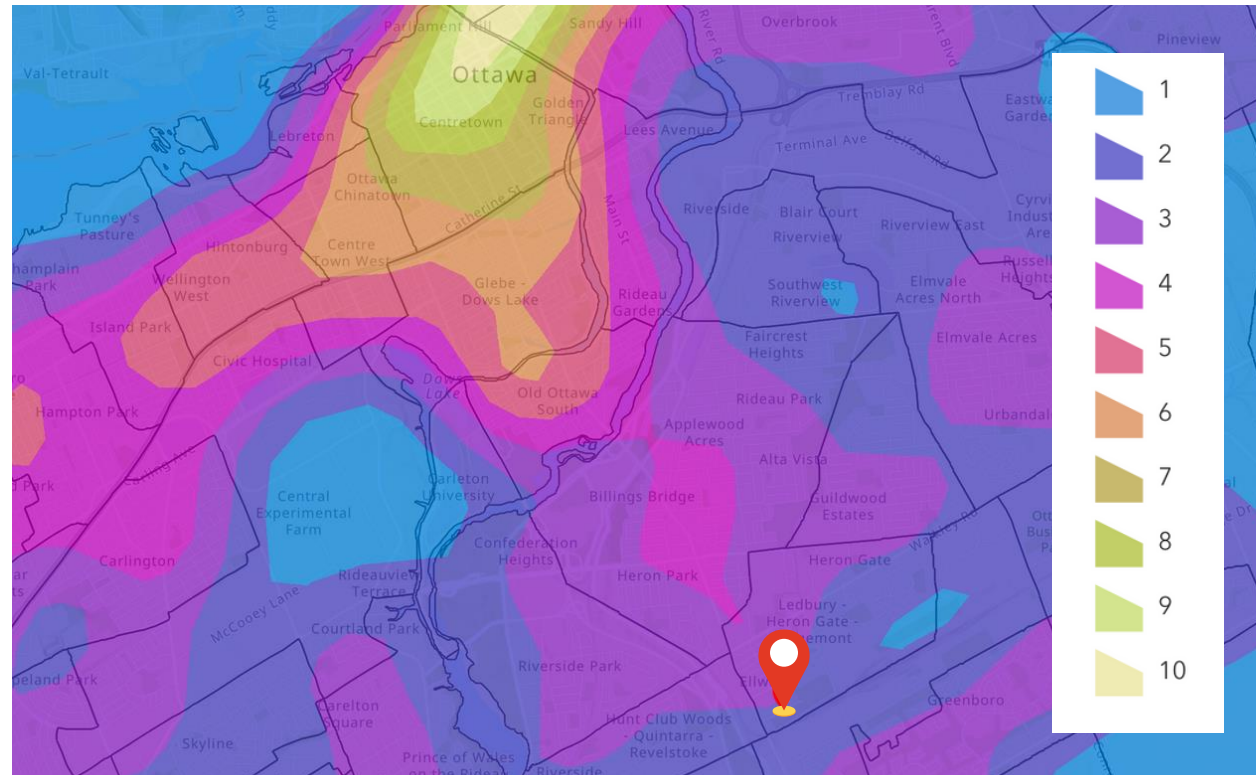


Photo of the fast-moving traffic at the Bank Street and Kitchener Ave intersection, the most direct way in and out of the Banff-Ledbury community



# Lighting

## Ottawa Street Light Map



### What am I seeing here?

In the map above, the number of lights per neighbourhood is represented by the colour scale, with blues and purples representing the fewest number of street lights, yellows representing the highest number of street lights, and the gradient of colours representing degrees of lighting in between

While about half of Ledbury-Heron Gate-Ridgemont is coloured in **pink (low light)**, Banff-Ledbury, represented by the red pin, falls into the **purple range (very low light)**, only falling behind green spaces with nearly no lighting, like the Experimental farm.

# The Banff-Ledbury Community values recreation, and we need to **meet them where they are.**

The Banff-Ledbury Community House is well positioned to facilitate positive, recreation-focused change in the boundaries of the community.



The **Community house is a big part of what makes Banff-Ledbury successful in providing recreation** opportunities to the members of their community. Staff and volunteers are all-hands-on-deck when it comes to negotiating for key agreements, grant applications for no- or low-cost programs in the community, and advocating for improved infrastructure to facilitate recreation.

**Every opportunity for engagement in recreation in the Banff-Ledbury community is appreciated and well used**, whether it's a women's-only physical activity class, community-facilitated baseball and basketball leagues and tournaments, City of Ottawa "I Love To" sports programs for children and youth, or community garden plots.



Community advocates are asking for **four, low-cost strategies** to improve physical activity in the Banff-Ledbury neighbourhood. -----



1

building a full-sized basketball court

2

creating a clean, well-paved, walking path in Ledbury Park

3

increasing the street lighting within the neighbourhood

4

consistent funds for sustained free/low-cost onsite programs









**X** @HEResearchGroup  
**Instagram** @HEResearchGroup  
**YouTube** <https://www.youtube.com/@HEResearchGroup>  
**Website** <https://traumainformedmovement.ca/>



**THANK YOU!**

CARLETON UNIVERSITY  
**Health & Wellness**  
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