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OPEN SPACE AND CLOSED YEARS

MULTICOMPONENT EXERCISE IN PUBLIC PARKS FOR +60

BEYOND GYMS, BEYOND FIXED SCHEDULES

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OLDER ADULTS AND (OUTDOOR) EXERCISING

INTRO

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COMMON FACTS

Physical inactivity is a global public health issue

Aging populations need accessible programs

Most exercise is still indoor-based

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THE SHIFT IN FOCUS

- We know exercise works
- Delivery is the problem

THE SHIFT IN FOCUS

- We know exercise works
- Delivery is the problem

- How can programs remain accessible, reliable and realistic for older adults?
- The key question: how do we make outdoor exercise work in everyday life?

OUTDOOR EXERCISING BENEFITS

- Physical: accessible opportunities for movement and exercise
- Mental: contact with nature and potential benefits for well-being
- Social: interaction, belonging and community participation

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THE PUBLIC-SPACE PARADOX

- Public spaces are close to home
- They are low-cost or free
- They are socially visible and inclusive
- They are already available in most communities

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THE PUBLIC-SPACE PARADOX

- Public spaces are close to home
- They are low-cost or free
- They are socially visible and inclusive
- They are already available in most communities
- **Yet most structured exercise programs remain indoors**

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FOR OLDER ADULTS, ACCESSIBILITY IS PART OF THE INTERVENTION

- Familiar neighbourhood settings
- Opportunities for social connection
- Less dependence on specialised indoor facilities
- Transport
- Finances

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SO, WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

ORGANIZATIONAL CHALLENGE – FIXED SCHEDULING

- Outdoor exercise has one obvious advantage - it happens in a real-life environment
- But that is also its main organisational challenge

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ORGANIZATIONAL CHALLENGE – FIXED SCHEDULING

- Outdoor exercise has one obvious advantage - it happens in a real-life environment
- But that is also its main organisational challenge
- **Fixed scheduling doesn't work for outdoor exercises**

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WHY FIXED SCHEDULES FAIL OUTDOORS?

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WHY FIXED SCHEDULES FAIL OUTDOORS?

- Outdoor weather conditions change
- It creates uncertainty
- A fixed timetable → cancelations
- Cancellations reduce reliability and reduce participation

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„OPEN SPACE AND CLOSED YEARS”

Ongoing project

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„OPEN SPACE AND CLOSED YEARS”

Outdoor multicomponent program

Focus on promoting physical activity in +60

Use of public open spaces

Program conducted in real-life outdoor settings

Outcomes: physical, adherence, psychosocial

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HOW IT ALL STARTED …

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JEANS
adidas





WHAT MAKES IT WORK?
DESPITE BEING OUTDOOR

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WHAT MAKES IT WORK?
DESPITE BEING OUTDOOR

- The innovation is in using simple technology to make outdoor exercise organisation more realistic
- Simple communication → flexible delivery
- WhatsApp announcement one day before
- Morning confirmation or cancellation
- **Digital literacy increased even in older (smartphone usage is regular)**
  - COVID-19

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SLIDE WITHHELD FOR PRIVACY

A screenshot of private correspondence has been removed from this website edition.

The original presentation is retained privately.

FROM RIGID TO ADAPTIVE

INDOOR LOGIC

Fixed day → Fixed hour

The session happens anyway

OUTDOOR LOGIC

- Check the forecast
  - Choose the best window
  - Confirm close to the session
- The idea is simple
  - **The schedule adapts to the environment**

SUMMARY

IN BRIEF

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WHAT DO WE KNOW?

- Public space: existing, local and visible
- Simple digital communication: familiar and inexpensive
- Adaptive scheduling: responsive to real conditions
- Community delivery: potential for scale

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WHAT DO WE KNOW?

- Public space: existing, local and visible
- Simple digital communication: familiar and inexpensive
- Adaptive scheduling: responsive to real conditions
- Community delivery: potential for scale

- **Together, these elements could turn public spaces from passive infrastructure into active community health resources**

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SCIENCE?

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FUTURE DIRECTIONS

More intervention studies

Long-term tracking

Policy integration

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KEY TAKEAWAY

Outdoor exercise boosts health & well-being

Strong benefits for older adults

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YUMMY!



Advice for the young at heart

Soon we will be older

When we gonnna make it work?

Holland & Orzabal, 1989

