

Leisure meaning: What really matters to young people with physical disabilities and implications for practice

Benita Powrie^{1,2}, Merrill Turpin¹, Jenny Ziviani^{1,3}, Jodie Copley¹, Niina Kolehmainen⁴
¹*School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, The University of Queensland, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia,* ²*Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust, Leeds, UK,* ³*Children's Allied Health Research, Queensland Health, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia,* ⁴*Institute of Health and Society, Newcastle University, Newcastle Upon Tyne, UK*

Introduction: The occupational category of leisure is viewed by young people with physical disabilities as essential to their quality of life, yet their leisure involvement is reduced compared to their non-disabled peers. Health, education and social care services are increasingly investing resources in leisure services, but it is unclear if these are having the desired impact. Effective facilitation of both attendance at, and involvement in, leisure is reliant upon understanding what leisure means to the young people themselves.

Objectives: This study's purpose was to understand what meaningful participation in leisure feels like for young people with complex physical and communication disabilities. These perspectives may provide valuable insights into how to optimize their participation and inform future research and provision.

Method: A hermeneutic phenomenological qualitative research design was used. Purposive sampling resulted in 6 participants (aged 10-19 years, 3 male, 3 female) who were interviewed multiple times. Data analysis was iterative and multi-directional over multiple stages to find emergent themes and concepts, leading to identification of essences of the leisure experience.

Results: Data analysis is in the final stages. The essences of leisure emerging from the data include enjoying, absorbing, controlling, relaxing, belonging, experiencing, expressing, and achieving. Further findings include the role of assistants in both enhancing and reducing leisure, the importance of physical movement experiences and the power of special interests as an identity marker.

Conclusion: The leisure essences along with additional findings may provide helpful insights for therapists wishing to broaden the horizons of young people through optimising leisure participation.