

#GetLifelongReady ATTRACTING AND RETAINING ADULTS



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#GetLifelongReady emphasises the importance for the outdoor recreation sector to implement strategies to attract and retain adults in outdoor recreation activities.

The Queensland outdoor recreation sector has a role to provide opportunities for adults to connect with an activity, and then have support mechanisms in place to ensure continued participation.

This fact sheet provides suggestions for recreation programmers to consider in the delivery of participation opportunities to enable adults to connect with opportunities and feel supported in their ongoing participation.

Adults Will Participate if They Want To: True or False?

We all need a bit of encouragement sometimes to get back into activities, or try something for the first time – adults included.

It is important for us to have an understanding of some of the barriers to participation adults face, as this gives us a better idea of the levers we need pull to connect with and support adult participation.

Structural Factors

- The youthfulness associated with sport and active recreation
- Societal expectations of adults and what is considered appropriate activity for adults
- Mixed messages about health and fitness
- Activities for adults are often short-term and disconnected from ongoing participation opportunities

Individual Factors

- Physical (in)ability, and whether ability is real or perceived
- Complexity of motivations and difficulty in finding the right match with activity provision
- Participant needs when entering, or re-entering, an activity

Rethinking Participation Pathways to be Inclusive of Adults

Participation pathways is a term commonly used in the sport and recreation context to describe the various points where a participant may encounter an activity, and the channels through which they participate and/or progress their participation.

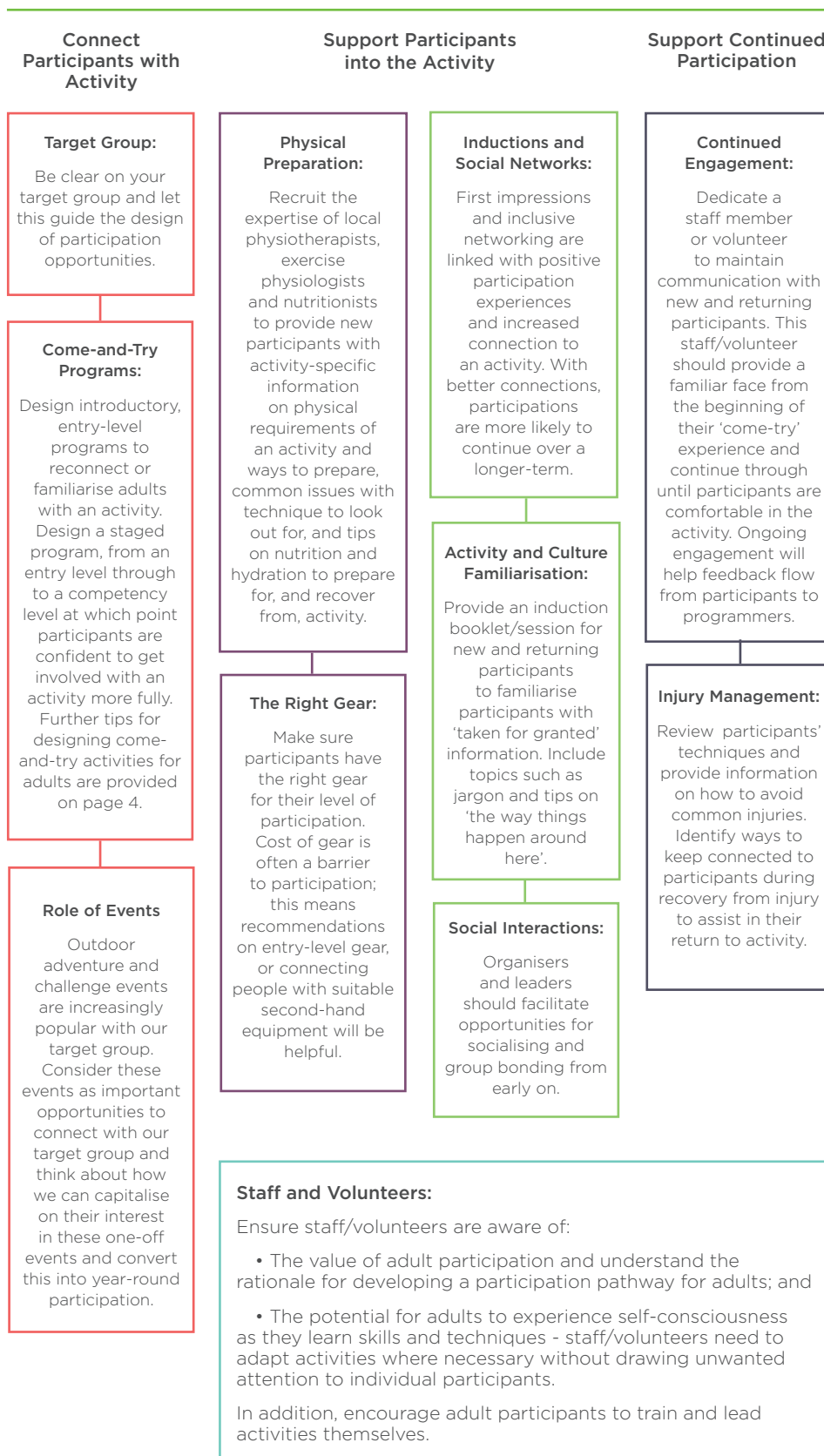
Participation pathways are most often associated with entry points for junior participants, and the channels associated with the progression of talented participants through to elite performance.

To develop participation pathways incorporating adults, we need to consider:

- Points for adult participants to enter or re-enter an activity;
- Ongoing participation opportunities; and
- Support mechanisms to encourage continued and long-term participation.



Developing Participation Pathways for Adults



Designing Come-and-Try Programs

We typically design Come-and-Try activities to encourage junior participation. This attraction strategy potentially provides a rich experience for adults trying something for the first time, or returning to sport. When attempting to engage adults at the entry level, Come-and-Try programs need to be more than a one-off or a couple of weeks' duration as is typical of junior participant engagement. Come-and-Try activities for adults need to reflect a mini-program which steps participants through skills and fitness. Six weeks is typically considered long enough to build 'readiness'; that is, improve skills, gain familiarity with an activity and the culture, and to work out how to fit the activity into a weekly schedule. This length is also consistent with the various 4-, 6- or 8-week challenges popular in the fitness industry, to build healthy habits. However, the length may vary depending on the technical and fitness needs of an activity.

At the end of the Come-and-Try program, there must be opportunities for ongoing participation in the activity.

Also consider designing membership deals to encourage longer-term commitment and transition into ongoing participation. Memberships discounts do not need to be substantial, but a few dollars off can be attractive to some segments of our adult market. Also consider the potential for couples membership or family deals.

Find Out More

This fact sheet has been developed as part of **#GetLifelongReady**. **#GetLifelongReady** is a capacity building project carried out by QORF for the Queensland outdoor recreation sector, aimed at enhancing sector engagement with people in their 30s, 40s and 50s.

#GetLifelongReady was enabled through the support of the 2015 Medibank Community Benefit Grants.

To see other fact sheets and relevant resources, visit www.qorf.org.au and search for 'getlifelongready'.

Notes



The Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation (QORF) is the peak body for outdoor recreation in Queensland. Find out more about our work at www.qorf.org.au.

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