

Active Health Case Study



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It is no surprise that Active Health is beneficial to our overall well-being; however, it is alarming that today, obesity in youth is one of the largest epidemics. Simply put: our youth are not active enough. According to the *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, “regular physical activity in childhood and adolescence improves strength and endurance, helps build healthy bones and muscles, helps control weight, reduces anxiety and stress, increases self-esteem, and may improve blood pressure and cholesterol levels,” yet here we are struggling with the largest obesity rate among youth in North America to date (CDC, 2013). The ministry of education BC has instated the “Daily Physical Activity” plan, which requires students from K-7 to participate in 30 minutes of physical activity provided by the school, and students grade 8-12 to participate in 150 minutes of physical activity a week (Ministry of Education webpage). Being physically active benefits our minds, bodies and spirits in many ways; however, people are just not willing to get up and move and be actively healthy.

Active Health can be measured and determined on various scales. To me, Active Health means maintaining a balance in day-to-day life by having a strong and positive emotional, social, physical and environmental well-being. In order to achieve this balance, it is important to eat healthy, exercise daily, connect with nature and learn to manage stress in a positive way. When asking Mr. Jensen his definition of Active Health, he stated: “walking, jogging, swimming, and riding bikes can start at a very young age and can continue well into our later years. Training and competing in sports regardless of the level or commitment, can also be a major

component for being active. For me, Active Health should create a positive physical, mental and emotional result in which should be valued very high on people's 'Needs' and 'Wants' list."

Mr. Jensen has been an incredible advocate for Active Health and played a major role in developing my sense of well-being throughout high school. Since I was little I have competed in the highest level of sport for my age group. I participated in many different sports and therefore came across many different coaches. As every athlete knows, different coaches have different expectations and sometimes you may not fit into their plan. Growing up, I had my fair share of coaches who pushed me down, and discouraged me immensely both in High School and out, which really took a toll on my mental health by dragging my confidence to an all time low. Mr Jensen became my basketball coach in grade 11 after having taught me in physical education for grades 9 and 10. Mr Jensen was the type of coach who made you work hard and pushed you to your limits and by doing so brought out the best in you. When assigned this case study, he was the first person that came to mind because he helped me regain confidence in sport and physical activity by encouraging me and believing in my athletic ability. He was a strong advocate of team unity and challenging yourself, which is why he organized a trip to Los Angeles, California, in December of 2010 to play some of the toughest opponents we would ever face. Our team of grade 11 and 12's went into this tournament with a confidence that was immediately shattered when we came across the first team with not one player under 6 feet tall. After an extremely embarrassing loss of 110-12 we were ready to

pack it in but Mr Jensen always instilled an attitude of finishing the job and always playing to the best of our abilities. Even after losing the next 3 games with scores similar to the first, we still managed to keep our heads high and maintain our dignity because Mr Jensen expected that of us and believed in our team. Furthermore, that trip allowed our team to create an extremely close bond by uniting us in a time of hardship. One idea that Mr Jensen strongly advocates is that sport creates strong friendships. He stated that by “participating in athletics, [it] has enabled [him] to develop a large network of teammates and friends.” I think that this is extremely important to acknowledge because for me, participating in sport allowed me to build a strong mental and social well-being by creating relationships with teammates who became close friends. Teams suffer through defeat together and triumph in victory together, and bonds like that are impossible to break. That trip was only a one time thing, however, Mr Jensen believes that in order to keep kids active you need to keep them interested and make it fun, which is what he tries to do every day while teaching or coaching.

Mr Jensen has played a major role in advocating Active Health for not only myself but many other students and youth within the community. He currently and for the past 15 years has taught at McMath Secondary School, encouraging youth to remain active and coaching various sports teams within the school. Mr Jensen was the youngest of 4 boys growing up and was part of a very active family that put him into competitive sports at a young age. Because of his love for sport he went on to become a coach and then eventually into the teaching profession. Through his many

years of dedication in coaching, he went on to coach Lacrosse at a professional level. His achievements include coaching the Colorado Mammoths for 1 year, Vancouver Ravens for 3 years, Calgary Roughnecks for 1 year, Langley Thunder for 3 years and making it to the Mann Cup finals with this final team. What is more remarkable than all these years of coaching Professional Lacrosse is that while coaching Calgary and Colorado, he was still teaching at McMath 5 days a week and would fly out every weekend to wherever his team was to continue coaching them. This dedication that he shows for his teams is amazing considering he has 3 kids of his own at home and a large number of students to teach at school. His passion for promoting active living is clearly noticeable from his actions.

Promoting Active Health as a physical educator in High School is sometimes challenging because students are more inclined to sit on a computer all day rather than go outside and get active. Mr Jensen constantly battles the social media monster, saying that between TV, phones, and computers, a kid can spend up to 10 hours a day sitting there staring at a screen. These devices offer an exciting and interesting world that a kid can go to which in turn puts Active Health on the back burner where it is easily forgotten. One study carried out in the states revealed that more than 70% of students grade 9 to 12 watched at least one hour of TV each school day, and more than 35% watched 3 hours or more each school day (Heath, G.W., et al. 1994). It is important to note that this study was carried out in 1994, and now 20 years later those numbers have drastically increased. In a study performed by Victoria J. Rideout, Ulla G. Foehr, and Donald F. Roberts, research revealed that in

2005 youth 8-18 were spending 6 ½ hours a day with media. 5 years later in 2010, that number jumped up to spending 7 hours 38 minutes a day with media. In the article they state: “the story of media in young people’s lives today is primarily a story of technology facilitating increased consumption” (Rideout , Foehr & Roberts , 2010). That is to say that cell phone usage and computer accessibility has become so common in today’s youth that spending such ridiculous amounts of time on social media is so simple and easy to do. Another struggle Mr Jensen has encountered with keeping youth active, is that girls are less inclined to participate in physical activity and after grade 10 when PE class becomes optional, many girls fail to continue down that path. An article published in 2005 stated: “The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute’s Growth and Health Study reported that girls’ median activity scores decreased dramatically between the ages of 9 and 18 years: 64% among White girls and 100% among African American girls” (Pate , Ward & Dowda , 2005). This is extremely problematic because this decrease in physical activity can lead to chronic diseases such as obesity and type 2 diabetes especially among African American girls (Pate, R.R. et al., 2005). Furthermore, girls are less inclined to participate in physical activity in school simply due to the fact that they don’t have enough time to do their hair and makeup before rushing off to their next class. This notion seems absurd but many girls across North America feel this pressure to maintain their image and look their best, but what they fail to realize is that being active improves overall well-being.

After talking to Mr Jensen about the challenges he faces trying to promote healthy living, he discussed what needs to be done to enhance active health within communities. He believes that the youth need to volunteer their time either teaching, mentoring, or leading both the young and old to stay active. Role modeling and showing young people the importance of lifelong active health is important because it is beneficial to your health and is a comfort later in life, which many of today's youth fail to realize or acknowledge. Furthermore, Mr Jensen, along with many others, agree that there needs to be a shift from social media to getting in exercise. Mr Jensen's prime goal to aid in this shift is by getting as many kids as possible to participate in sport whether it's at a competitive or recreational level. This can be done by introducing young kids to sport so they have a grasp on it from an early age, which instills a set of values to carry on throughout life.

Active Health is an extremely important topic today. It plays a crucial role in determining the overall health of our youth and needs to be presented to students with the upmost importance. It is the role of teachers, coaches and leaders within the community to promote Active Health with an urgency that demonstrates the need for youth to become active now to avoid lifelong diseases and illnesses. Within every area of Active Health education, there is room for improvement and it is necessary that new and innovative ways be presented to engage the youth in a way that keeps them interested. Whether it is sport, nutrition or simply going outside for a daily walk, active health advocates need to demonstrate the same behaviors they expect from the youth if there is ever to be a rise in the involvement from our youth.

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Recommended Source:

Ministry of Education Website

APPENDIX:

Case Study Questions:

- 1) What University did you attend?
- 2) Can you give a short biography on your life history? And how you got involved with active health?
- 3) Was active health a big part of your life, growing up?
- 4) Your own personal definition of Active health?
- 5) Why do you feel active health is important?
- 6) What are the benefits to teenagers for active health?
- 7) The challenges you have had to face with coaching or mentoring people to try and stay active?
- 8) What's wrong with the kids today and not getting active enough? Whats the reason for this? What could be done?
- 9) Tell me about the success you have had on peers or people around you in with active health?
- 10) Can you give me a description of the ways in which you hope to further enhance others with active health or physical activity?

Portion of an email sent from Mr. Jensen to my mom after my June 2011 Graduation from McMath Secondary School:

As for Lindsay, I thought coming into grade 11 she was going to have more success in volleyball than basketball. Unfortunately, she had a horrible experience and didn't get a fair chance to develop her skills and display them in game situations. Instead she was receiving very little opportunity, which dragged her confidence to an all time low. Instead of quitting or showing her displeasure to her teammates, she stayed as strong as possible to get through this negative experience. With the fall season being disastrous and something Lindsay wasn't accustomed to, she simply could have quit all sports at McMath and went into other activities. In the tough Machin way, she got right back on her feet and played a great basketball season, as well as the present soccer season. Her determination and strong willingness to fight through adversity cannot be coached. It is a clear sign of her personality, character and overall make-up. The best thing about the Machin girls is they don't make excuses. Whatever happens, they keep pushing and fighting to get the job done. Many athletes are quick to blame others for their personal shortcomings. The Machin girls take the bull by the horns, and take personal responsibility if things don't work out.

PICTURES

Mr. Jensen, Jeff (my grad date) and me at my 2011 graduation:



Basketball trip to California in December 2010 organized by Mr Jensen:

[Disneyland for the day with the team](#)



Santa Monica Beach with the team



Medieval dinner and show with the team



One of our games at LA Central High school



Coaching the Langley Thunder lacrosse team in 2012:



Pep Rally at McMath Secondary school 2011:



McMath Secondary School where Mr. Jensen continues to teach:

