WELLNESS MATTERS PROGRAMS

Wellness Matters Programs

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Photo of parent and child in the Swim Safe: ASD,

Wellness is critical to overall well being for all individuals and can be even more important for individuals with disabilities as it offers opportunities to not only engage in physical activities but also to socialize with peers that they may not have otherwise. The Wellness Matters Program was developed to offer opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their family members to spend quality time together enjoying physical activity and activities related to wellness. The Wellness Matters Program consists of 1) Inclusive First Aid/CPR/AED; 2) Swim Safe: ASD; and 3) Wellness Matters Physical Activity Program.

Inclusive First Aid/CPR/AED

About 65% of Americans receive CPR certification; however, only about 18% maintain the certification. The statistics are even less for certification for individuals with disabilities. Twenty-six percent of Americans are living with a disability. These statistics demonstrate the need for individuals with disabilities, caregivers, and family members to have the opportunity to become certified.

This program was developed to address this need and is open to the disability community including adults with I/DD, caregivers, and family members. The ability to identify and respond to various health issues, provide proper First Aid and how to perform CPR/AED are integral components of health and wellness.

Classes offer opportunities for participants to learn these lifesaving skills. Participants learn how to assess the scene for safety, appropriate CPR/AED and First Aid based on the assessment, how to address choking, and other health-related, injury-related, and environmental- related situations.

Curriculum is culturally relevant, tailored to the disability community, and participants receive American Heart Association (AHA) certification upon completion. Each session consists of two 3 hours classes (Class #1- First Aid; Class # 2- CPR/AED) and participants must attend both classes to receive certification. To date, 50 people have participated and received certification.

Swim Safe: Aquatic Skills Development (ASD) Program

Drowning is the leading cause of death for individuals with ASD and accounts for 91% of the US total of accidental drownings. Autistic individuals like the water because it is calming and peaceful.

This program was developed to address these alarming statistics and is open to individuals with ASD ages 4 to adult.

Participants learn safety skills to prevent drowning, basic swimming skills, increase comfort level in the water, increase communication skills, and develop relationships with other families. A family-centered approach is used and the parent/guardian, family member or Registered Behavior Therapist (RBT) are trained to serve as the instructor. Each session is 8 weeks, meets once a week, and offers three 30-minute lessons. To date, 300 families have participated in the program.

Wellness Matters Physical Activity Program

Less than 45% of individuals with a mobility disability engage in physical activity and approximately 40% of individuals with disabilities in the U.S. experience social isolation.

This program was developed to provide opportunities to address these statistics and is open to adults with I/DD, caregivers, family members, and coaches.

Participants are offered the opportunity to engage in popular lifetime activities, Paralympic activities, and adapted physical activities with family members, caregivers, coaches, and peers. A family-centered approach is used and the parent/guardian, family member or coaches are asked to participate to assist the individual with I/DD. Each session is 8 weeks and meets once a week for an hour.

To date, 20 families have participated in the program.

Get Involved!

Families:	learn new teaching & learning techniques.
Partners:	become a community partner and share upcoming programs within your network, or host a private group session.
Volunteer:	learn new teaching & learning techniques.
Graduate Students:	enroll in DIS 688 fieldwork/practicum to assistant.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

The Wellness Matters Programs are offered throughout the year at various locations.

SWIM SAFE: ASD PROGRAM

Classes are offered at two locations:

- University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa (UHM) Duke Kahanamoku Aquatic Complex during the fall and spring semester.
- Kroc Center in Kapolei year round.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PROGRAM

Classes are offered at UHM during the fall and spring semester.

INCLUSIVE FIRST AID CPR/AED

Classes are offered at the Center on Disability Studies (CDS) UHM throughout the year.

Upcoming sessions are sent by email through the Wellness Matters Programs listserv, Special Parent Information Network (SPIN), CDS quarterly newsletters, as well as, CDS website and the Hawaiʻi Autism Foundation website. For information regarding any of the programs and to be added to the email lists, contact Dr. Kelle L Murphy at kellem@hawaii.edu.