



Understanding sport adherence strategies in Masters athletes: A grounded theory

Zakry Walsh¹, Sean Brayton¹, Bettina Callary², Scott Rathwell¹

¹University of Lethbridge, ²Cape Breton University

Introduction

- Much of the **global population** is **physically inactive** (Colley et al., 2011)
- **Masters athletes (MAs)** tend to **exceed physical activity (PA) recommendations** (Young & Medic, 2011)
- **Pre-existing behaviour change theories/models** that are **created outside of sport and PA** are often **ineffective** (Rhodes & Nigg, 2011)

Methods and Participants

- **Straussian grounded theory** (Corbin & Strauss, 2018)
- Semi-structured **interviews**
- Data analysis
 - Open Coding, Axial Coding, Theoretical Integration
 - Memoing and Constant Comparison
- **14 MAs** (9F, 5M) Average age = **53.6 years**, *SD* = 8.38



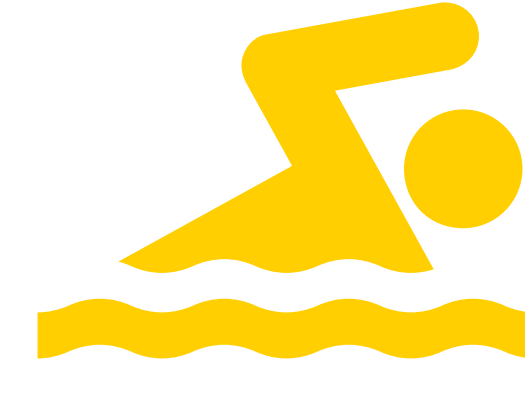
Paddling
Sports = 4



Marathon/
Triathlon = 4



Track and
Field = 3



Swimming = 3

Discussion

- MAs **depended on strategies** that helped them **manage other priorities** (e.g., work, family) (Dionigi et al., 2015; Makepeace et al., 2021)
- MAs are the **architects of their own developmental environment** (e.g., jobs, distance to training) which helps them **maintain their participation in Masters sport** (Ericksson et al., 1993; Young et al., 2021)
- Our **grounded theory** captured **important contextual aspects of sport and PA** (Rhodes & Nigg, 2011) which may better **inform older adults on how to adhere to sport and PA**

Results

Grounded Theory



Personal Adherence Strategies

"I typically **train early in the mornings**, where it **wouldn't be interfering with family responsibilities** and it **wouldn't be interfering with work**."

"I knew I **needed to be fit** and I knew I couldn't just exercise, I **needed goals**."

Environmental & Contextual Factors

"I think of **shift work**, it's going to be **challenging** ... so I think having a **very traditional balanced work schedule** assists with **[regular participation]**"

"Being by the river valley was an important part of our decision to live where we live ... **my participation influenced my proximity**."

Social Factors

"I had to **elicit the support of the whole family** to take it on because it meant that **my husband needed to do more childcare**."

"At this stage of my life I want to do **[competitions]** if my friends are going."