TITLE: Promoting Exercise with Mindfulness-Based Wellness Coaching at the YMCA: a pragmatic randomized control trial

ABSTRACT

Background: Based on a mandate to interact with individuals from diverse ethnicities and socioeconomic strata, the YMCA is an appropriate venue for testing methods of promoting exercise. The Toronto Sheppard YMCA (TS-YMCA) services 3000 people daily. By introducing on-site research that improves exercise promotion at TS-YMCA, we aim to improve site-based practice and advance the exercise promotion research literature.

Objective: A pragmatic randomized control trial (RCT) to compare an innovative health coaching approach (Mindfulness-Based Wellness Coaching or MBWC) used to promote sustained exercise with usual-care YMCA exercise promotion methods.

Methods: We assess, whether MBWC, within the My Fitness Program (MFP) at the TS-YMCA, results in greater gains in fitness (peak VO2), self-reported exercise activity (GLTEQ-LSI), stress reduction (Perceived Stress Scale), mindfulness (FFMQ), self-compassion (SCS) and therapeutic alliance (WAI-SR) as compared to usual care exercise promotion. We further assess whether MBWC results in more sustained vs. interrupted YMCA memberships when compared to usual care exercise promotion. Statistical analyses will focus on an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) to evaluate between-group differences in peak VO2 (primary outcome) adjusted for baseline (VO2) values and age, sex, ethnicity, baseline activity levels (Godin LTQ) & other key covariates.