

Making values actionable:
Using Principles-Focused
Evaluation to implement
an ecological model of
community-focused
therapeutic recreation for
children and youth with
disabilities

Introduction

Holland Bloorview Kids
Rehabilitation Hospital (HBKRH)
in Toronto, Canada, is known for
its accessible, inclusive, and
engaging recreation programs
for children and youth with
physical disabilities and other
special needs (Table 1).

The ecological model of
community-focused therapeutic
recreation for children and youth
with disabilities¹ is a four-part
process model that outlines
collaboration between service
providers and community
members to deliver accessible
programs (Table 1) that increase
empowerment, community
participation, and social
inclusion for this population.
This is a process model and as
such, tells us what we need to
do, not how to do it. To be able
to action this model, additional
methods are needed.

Principles-Focused
Evaluation (P-FE)

P-FE² emerged from the
Developmental Evaluation
tradition, giving evaluators the
opportunity to make the often-
intangible values of an
organization or project known
through actionable and
evaluable statements called
principles. These principles
inform choices and tell us how to
act. Therefore, we can see if our
values are clear, meaningful,
and actionable in other contexts;
are actually being followed
(accountability); and it they are
leading to our desired results.
This type of evaluation can
support implementing the
ecological model in practice.

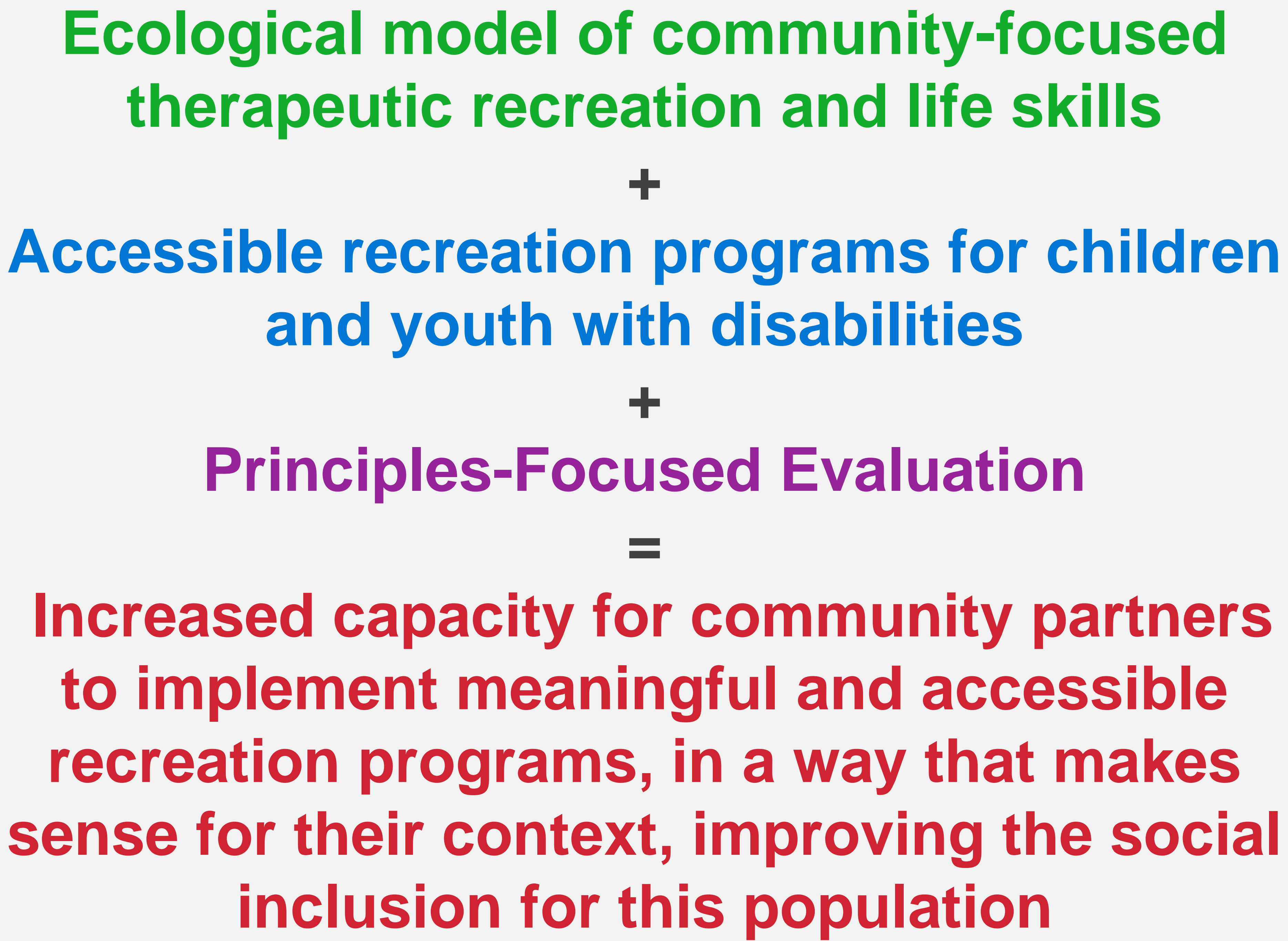


Table 1: Recreation Programs for External Implementation

		
artsXpress+ is a high-quality, accessible arts programs led by professional artists and musicians.	Mind Body Mingle is a community-based, recreational group program about wellness for high school students with disabilities.	Robotics teaches children and youth with disabilities about STEM based concepts, and how to apply them to make robots move.

Table 2: Example of the Four Elements of a Principle

Principle	Flexible, Adaptable, Individualized
Principle Defined	All staff know that each child/youth is unique and programming is built based on that knowledge.
Operationalizing Statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Complete intake/screening to assess participant individualized needsIndividual participant needs are pro-actively factored into planning prior to start of programPrograms are created to be flexible and adaptable; to be able to change as participant needs change (within minutes, within the session, across the program etc.)
Minimum Specifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Screening must occur prior to program to gather participant information and needsAll abilities are recognized and planned for; programs are fully integrated and registration priority is given to any participant who has a disability, especially those who cannot be successfully integrated into a community recreation program.

What did we do?

Developed Principles through a
design workshop series:

- 4 sessions
- Appreciative inquiry methods
- Engaged Program Leads, managers, staff that ran the program internally and families previous participants
- Created 6 principles that encompass the overarching core values of Holland Bloorview and the recreation programs.
- These Principle are:
 - Flexible, Adaptable, Individualized
 - Safety
 - Tone, Climate, and Inclusivity
 - Agency
 - Innovation
 - Training

A note on Principles

Each principle contains four
elements (Example in Table 2):

- The principle
- Definition of the principle
- Statements to further operationalize the principle
- Minimum specifications³

Created a community partner
selection screening process:

- Using the Principles, we created a 3-step screening process to select community partners committed to our core values of accessible and meaningful recreation opportunities
- These processes include:
 - Web intake checklist
 - Phone interview
 - Site visit

COVID & Implementation

Implementation of our partner
screening process for program
implementation has been paused
due the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. King, G., Curran, C., and McPherson, A. (2012). A four-part ecological model of community-focused therapeutic recreation and life skills services for children and youth with disabilities. Child: care, health and development, 39(3), 325-36. doi:10.1111/j.1365-2214.2012.01390.x
2. Quinn Patton, M. (2018). Principles-Focused Evaluation: The GUIDE. The Guildford Press. 3. Zimmer, B., Lindberg, C., and Plsek, P. (2008). Edgware: Insights From Complexity Science For Health Care Leaders. V H A, Incorporated.