Chronic disease is linked to physical limitations in later life that could be prevented or managed through wellness initiatives. Wellness centers have emerged as a way for older adults to stay active. A sample of 26 members of a wellness center in southwestern Ohio are interviewed to better understand the barriers and facilitators that prevent or promote attendance to the wellness center. Interviews are transcribed, checked for accuracy, and organized into sub-themes to include eight barriers and twelve facilitators. Examples of barriers include lack of motivation and physical limitations, facilitators include social relationships and determination. The wellness center promotes a three-dimensional wellness model which includes spiritual, physical, and social wellness, similar to Jan Montague’s six-dimensional wellness model. Findings are consistent with the literature, showing the importance of a whole-person wellness model. Four recommendations are presented to the wellness center to encourage a transition to a whole-person wellness model.
BARRIERS & FACILITATORS TO ATTENDING A WELLNESS CENTER

Thesis

Submitted to the
Faculty of Miami University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Masters of Gerontological Studies

by
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Miami University
Oxford, Ohio
2016

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This Practicum Report titled

BARRIERS & FACILITATORS TO
ATTENDING A WELLNESS CENTER

by

Josie Marie Rader

has been approved for publication by

The College of Arts and Science

and

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**Dedication**

First, and foremost, I thank God for giving me the wisdom, ambition, and passion for the field of gerontology. I thank Him every day for the infinite love and support I have been given by so many beautiful people. I would like to dedicate this thesis report to all of the people who have transformed my view of aging, including those who always look on the bright side of life and inspire me to live life to the fullest. I am thankful for every experience, but my favorite experiences include spending time with my family and friends, volunteering with Opening Minds through Art, exercise classes at The Knolls of Oxford, the Walk to End Alzheimer’s, and the Hydrodynamics classes at Berkeley Square. I have learned what it means to age beautifully with great joy for life. To everyone who has taught me what it means to be a gerontologist and serve others with a happy heart…THANK YOU. I will forever be an advocate for the field of gerontology because of your energy, positivity, and faith.

“Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. 
But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning.”
- Sir Winston Churchill

In memory of my grandfather Jack F. Tucker... 
until we meet again.
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First, I would like to thank the Lord for giving me the determination to pursue this degree and choose something I am so passionate about. Second, I would like to thank my husband, Cody, for being there to encourage and love me throughout my studies. I would also like to thank my mother for telling me to reach for the highest star…and reminding me that all things are possible through faith in God. Thanks to my grandmother Betty & grandfather Jack for loving me unconditionally. Thank you to my step-father James and sisters Jess & Jackie for all the laughs to help me get through some stressful moments. I would also like to thank my friends and Faith & Fitness for bringing me so much JOY! I would like to thank my amazing cohort and my GTY crew, most specifically Candy and Gifty, for becoming my best friends over the last two years. I would like to thank my pastor, Jim Menninger, for the constant prayers and spiritual encouragement. A BIG thank you to Scott Brown for always greeting me with a smile, making me laugh, and sharing my passion for health and wellness. He has been a great mentor and guide throughout this process. I also want to thank Katy Abbott and Jennifer Kinney for sending me positive vibes and assistance with my research methodology. I would also like to thank Dr. Elizabeth “Like” Lokon and Opening Minds through Art for inspiring me to serve people with a happy heart. I will always carry that OMA sparkle with me wherever I go. Next, I would like to thank the wellness center members and staff for allowing me to access the facility for my research. They not only opened their doors with a smile, but also encouraged me throughout the entire process. I am also thankful to be working, full-time for them starting May 16, 2016! I would also like to thank Scripps Gerontology Center for assisting with printing and allowing me to borrow the equipment to record and transcribe. I want to especially thank Lisa Grant for sharing her faith, supporting me, and giving me a warm hug to help get through some stressful moments in life. I would like to thank the Cheryl Johnson and the Graduate Student Association for funding my research by providing me with a $200 scholarship. Last, I would like to thank everyone who has furthered my education and impacted my experience at Miami University…my professors, mentors, advisors, classmates, and friends. Without the love, laughter, and memories…Miami would just be brick buildings. I am thankful for the past six years and I am eager to see what the Lord has in store for me next. Love & Honor.
Barriers & Facilitators to Attending a Wellness Center

By Josie Marie Rader
I. Introduction

The population of older adults in the United States is growing faster than any other group. This phenomenon is called population aging (Shrestha, 2000). The percentage of older adults in 2000 was 12.4% in relation to the projected percentage of 20% in 2050 (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, 2003). As people age, they experience changes within the body (American Federation for Aging Research, 2011). As the body ages, bone mass decreases as well as some decline in organ function. Cardiovascular endurance, resting heart rate, and muscle composition operate at lower levels (Bean, 2004). The connective tissue begins to stiffen, making it more difficult to move. Vision and reaction time are affected, which can also limit balance (Armbruster & Gladwin, 2001). Changes in the body take place at a quicker rate if an individual becomes sedentary. Older adults partake in sedentary behavior between 8 to 11 hours per day leading to negative health outcomes including chronic disease (Greenwood-Hickman, Renz, & Rosenberg, 2015). More than 88% of adults 65 and older have at least one chronic disease, and more than 57 million individuals have multiple chronic diseases (Wolff, Starfield, & Anderson, 2002). The percentage of comorbidities has increased from 37.2% in 2000 to 45.3% in 2010 and is expected to continue increasing (Freid, Bernstein, & Bush, 2012; Wolff et al., 2002). Many people experience multiple chronic diseases including diabetes, respiratory disease, and arthritis. These conditions create limitations for activities of daily living (ADLs) and instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs). ADLs are basic personal activities which include bathing, toileting, transferring from bed to chair, eating, dressing, and mobility (Scala, 1999). IADLs include household/independent living tasks like using the telephone, managing finances, housework, preparing meals, grocery shopping, and managing medications (Scala, 1999). Some individuals discover ways to modify the negative outcomes associated with their disease.

Some individuals buffer negative health outcomes by attending wellness programs. Wellness is a continuous process where individuals become aware of self and aim to make decisions towards a better existence (Montague & Frank, 2007). Wellness centers help individuals manage their diseases, promote better health habits, enhance social connections, create positive environments, emphasize exercise education, and encourage self-confidence (Rasinaho, et al., 2006; Miller & Iris, 2002). The National Wellness Institute describes wellness as a multi-dimensional concept that
incorporates lifestyle, spiritual and emotional well-being, and the social and physical environment. The emergence of wellness centers began in the 1970s and 1980s as a way to prevent and/or combat chronic diseases and maintain health (Watkins & Kligman, 1993). In 1976, Dr. Bill Hettler created a multi-dimensional model of wellness that includes six domains: 1) occupational, 2) emotional, 3) spiritual, 4) intellectual, 5) social, and 6) physical wellness (Hettler, 1976). Wellness centers have evolved over time to become more flexible for the needs of the whole person. This study observes the barriers and facilitators that prevent or promote attendance to a wellness center in southwestern Ohio. Twenty-two community-dwelling adults aged 50 and older are interviewed. Recommendations are made to the wellness center addressing the barriers and facilitators found in this study, as well as ways to promote a whole-person wellness model.

II. Background

In 1994, Jan Montague created a new holistic wellness model called, whole-person wellness, to include six domains of wellness: 1) intellectual, 2) social, 3) emotional, 4) vocational, 5) spiritual, and 6) physical to encompass personal wellness (Montague & Frank, 2007). Since the creation of the whole-person wellness model, many positive changes have taken place within wellness centers. Many centers are changing their philosophies to embrace the whole-person wellness model, culture shifts are occurring among many different communities, wellness-based concepts and attitudes are being shared more often, and more people are encouraged to participate in individual and group wellness activities (Montague & Peters, 2005). The multi-dimensional, holistic approach assists individuals in reaching their maximum potential and accomplishing their goals. All domains of wellness interconnect with one another to create personal wellness (Montague & Frank, 2007).

Intellectual Wellness. Intellectual wellness is the action of thinking creatively and logically (Montague, Piazza, Peters, Eippert, and Poggiali, 2002). This domain encourages people to gain education, knowledge, skills, and resources through creative, stimulating activities (Kang & Russ, 2009). Two examples of this domain include lifetime learning programs and activities that stimulate creative thinking (Montague et al., 2002). Creativity in later life impacts health by reducing medical visits, falls, loneliness, and medication use (Cohen, Perlstein, Chapline, Kelly,
Firth, & Simmens, 2006). Thinking creatively stimulates the brain and encourages individuals to socially engage with others, which leads to better health outcomes (Cohen, 2006).

**Spiritual Wellness.** Spirituality refers to a person’s power of purpose, perception of society, and strength of mind (Fisher, 2011). Spiritual wellness is the purpose and value of an individual’s existence, positive thoughts, resistance to stressors, and self-efficacy (Kang & Russ, 2009; Myer et al., 2000). Spirituality is linked to better physical and mental health, lower mortality, lower levels of cardiovascular disease, hypertension, substance abuse, and depression, and correlated with quicker recovery from illness (Kennedy, Abbott, & Rosenberg, 2002; Briggs & Shoffner, 2006). Although there are many benefits to spiritual wellness, it is often interchangeable with religiosity. This becomes problematic as people do not want to be associated with one particular religious group (Hawk, 2004; Fisher, 2011). Therefore, a clear definition of spirituality should be evident in the wellness program. Some examples of spiritual wellness include prayer, meditation, peace, silence, self-determination, and inspiration (Montague, et al., 2002). One specific example of a spiritual wellness program is Tai Chi, which engages the mind and body through continuous motion, deep breathing, mental focus, and harmony (Rogers, Larkey, and Keller, 2009). Overall, spiritual wellness relieves muscle tension, reduces anxiety and stress, decreases pain and increases the awareness of self (Sandlund & Norlander, 2000).

**Emotional Wellness.** Individuals experience emotional wellness as they become more aware of their feelings. Emotional wellness is the positive feeling one has about life and connecting with others through commitment, trust, and respect (Kang & Russ, 2009). Emotional wellness also encourages people to manage their feelings and accept who they are while assessing limitations. This skill allows for people to find ways to cope with stressful situations in life through positive emotions and psychological strengths (Montague et al., 2001; Fry & Keyes, 2010). Older adults experience a healthier longevity when they connect with others to find deeper meaning in life and overcome stressful events with a positive mind (Fry & Keyes, 2010).

**Physical Wellness.** Physical wellness encourages individuals to participate in activities that promote cardiovascular, strength, endurance, flexibility, personal safety, self-care, and knowledge of the medical system as well as resist poor health behaviors such as smoking or excessive alcohol
consumption (Montague et al., 2002; Kang & Russ, 2009). Physical wellness is strongly linked to mortality, disability, and reducing the side effects of chronic disease (Bean et al., 2004). Older adults who engage in physical wellness programs have fewer chronic diseases, less pain associated with physical limitations, better management of chronic disease, stronger coping skills to buffer stress, and less depression and anxiety (Rasinaho, et al., 2006). Physical wellness is also correlated with improved cognition by increasing brain mass and flow of oxygen to the brain (Burns, Cronk, Anderson, Donnelly, Thomas, Harsha, Brooks, & Swerdlow, 2008; Weuve, Kang, Manson, Breteler, Ware, & Grodstein, 2004). Some ways to promote physical wellness include group fitness classes, health screenings, and nutrition courses (Montague et al., 2002).

**Vocational Wellness.** Vocational wellness is finding meaning in personal and occupational dimensions in life through contributions that produce rewards or satisfaction (Kang & Russ, 2009). This domain encourages individuals to participate in meaningful opportunities that help create a positive attitude about their lives and professional careers (Montague et al., 2002). Examples include encouraging people to develop new interests and assisting individuals with selecting volunteer opportunities. Volunteering decreases the onset of hypertension and reduces the risk of mortality among older adults (Sneed & Cohen, 2013; Okun, Yeung, and Brown, 2013).

**Social Wellness.** Social wellness encourages individuals to positively contribute to and engage in the community (Montague et al., 2002; Kang & Russ, 2009). Wellness centers promote social wellness by providing opportunities for individuals to build positive, uplifting relationships with other members, friends, and family. Some examples of social wellness include respect for self and others, active participation within the center and community, and advocating for social causes (Montague et al., 2002). Wellness centers provide individuals with community resources, home-study programs, medication adherence plans, and transportation assistance (Armbruster & Gladwin, 2001). Individuals report better social relationships, more positive emotions, and less interpersonal conflicts in later life (Luong, Charles, & Fingerman, 2011).

**Personal Wellness.** All six domains facilitate personal wellness, which encourages optimism, self-direction, and autonomy. In order to promote personal wellness, Jan Montague’s six domains of whole-person wellness model must be distinguished within the wellness center. The six domains of
wellness help create personal wellness, which is not the absence of disease or disability, but
instead, the presence of strength and determination. Jan Montague explains this very well, “People
who think they can, will; and individuals who think they can’t, won’t” (Montague et al., 2002).
Therefore, individuals are either denied or granted the opportunity to experience personal wellness.

**Barriers to Holistic Wellness Programs.** Physical wellness is emphasized as the most important
domain in the whole-person wellness model among many wellness programs, regardless of the
evidence promoting the holistic approach (Montague, et al., 2002; Montague & Frank, 2007;
Strout & Howard, 2012). Grants and other funding efforts are directed toward physical wellness,
because it produces tangible data as evidence, whereas measures for intellectual, emotional,
spiritual, social, and vocational wellness domains are vague (Hawk, 2004; Berkman, Glass,
Brissette, & Seeman, 2000). The one-dimensional approach to wellness separates the mind and
body, whereas the multi-dimensional, holistic approach encourages the interconnection of the mind
and body (Hawks, 2004). Personal barriers also discourage people from attending wellness
programs. These barriers include poor health, fear of falling or injury, negative experiences with
wellness centers, lack of social supports, program costs, lack of awareness, no transportation,
limited experience with exercise methods, lack of motivation, low energy, and time constraints
(Rasinaho, Hirvensalo, Leinonen, Lintunen, & Rantanen, 2006; Rimmer, Wang, & Smith, 2008;
Resnick & D’Adamo, 2007). These barriers could be buffered or eliminated with the whole-person
wellness model, however, many wellness centers do not encompass all six domains of this model.
Therefore, personal wellness is not obtained. The six domains are connected and should not be
disaggregated in order to best facilitate personal wellness for all members (Montague et al., 2002;
Hawk, 2004).

**Facilitators to Holistic Wellness Programs.** There are five key components to facilitating a whole-
person wellness model within wellness centers. The first component is participating in physical
activity at least three times a week to promote the ability to remain active and complete activities
of daily living (ADLs). The second component is to engage in meaningful activities including
opportunities to volunteer and share interests with others. In the third component, socializing and
creating relationships with others in the wellness program is emphasized. The fourth component is
to stimulate the brain with new knowledge. In the last component, adding meaning and purpose to
life is the focus (Edelman & Montague, 2008). The most important facilitators related to successful wellness programs include variety and structure of programs, ability to overcome lack of motivation to participate, financial resources, wellness philosophy, organization, appropriate equipment, the number and skill of staff members, environment, and the physical ability of members (Edelman & Montague, 2008). These facilitators support the need for a whole-person wellness model to operate a successful wellness center.

III. Research Questions

This research explores the facilitators and barriers that promote and inhibit access to a wellness center in southwestern Ohio. This wellness center is housed within a continuing care retirement community (CCRC) and serves over 3,300 individuals in the Butler Country region. Members range from 50 to 104 years old. This wellness center is driven by the “core philosophy,” which incorporates three domains of the whole-person wellness model into their programming: spiritual, physical, and social wellness. The wellness center conceptualizes spiritual wellness as personal beliefs, traditions, and values, physical wellness is categorized as exercise, health care, and nutrition, and social wellness is defined as relationships with others, the community, and the world (Elements, 2015). Although the wellness center serves over 3,300 members, only 500 attend at least twice a week. Therefore, a majority of members do not regularly attend the offered programs and events. This study will explore the facilitators and barriers that promote and inhibit access to activities, group fitness classes, trips, and independent exercise at the wellness center in southwestern Ohio.

Research Question 1: What are the barriers and facilitators that inhibit and promote access to the wellness center?

Research Question 2: What are the consequences for the missing domains of the whole-person wellness model? The missing domains include 1) vocational, 2) emotional, and 3) intellectual wellness.

Research Question 3: What are the recommendations and future implications to help promote personal wellness within the wellness center in southern Ohio?
IV. Methods

Sample. Twenty-two in-person descriptive qualitative interviews were conducted with the assistance of interview guides (see appendix A). Four sets of married couples were interviewed together upon their request. Four men and fourteen women were interviewed individually. A total of twenty-six members participated in this study. Participants were recruited using a convenience sampling method during class sessions, independent exercise time, and group activities at the wellness center. All participants are community-dwelling members who live in condos within the CCRC or homes around the area. Members pay out-of-pocket or qualify for SilverSneakers, which is a benefit associated with some Medicare Advantage and supplemental plans. The wellness center waives membership fees for all individuals eligible for SilverSneakers. Non-eligible members pay a monthly fee of $56 for an individual or $84 for a couple membership. All SilverSneakers members have the option to upgrade their membership for $20 a month to gain access to all non-SilverSneakers fitness classes. All members live within the southwestern Ohio area, including Hamilton, Fairfield, and other nearby locations. The members range in ages from 50 to 91 years. Eighty-five percent of the members are between the ages 64 and 84. All participants attend the wellness center two or more days per week and twenty-three members attend 3 or more days per week. Participants attend a variety of programs, including land exercises classes, water exercise classes, independent exercise, organized

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Table 1. Participant Characteristics</th>
<th>n</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Days Attending</strong></td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>5+</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td><strong>Attendance in Programs</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairfield</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
activities, trips and outings, and other activities. Members can attend more than one type of activity, so the total number of activities are greater than the sample size. Twenty-two participate in group exercise classes, 12 exercise independently, and 7 participate in organized activities, trips, and other events (see table 1). The Miami University office for the Advancement of Research and Scholarship approved this study. All participants completed a written consent form prior to beginning the interview process (see appendix A).

Data Analysis. Qualitative research explains the connection between individual behaviors and concepts to describe a phenomenon (Bradley, Curry, & Devers, 2007). In-depth interviews are traditionally used in qualitative studies to help capture individual experiences within a certain context. In this study, twenty-two 30-minute interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and checked for accuracy. Interviews were conducted using an interview guide and probes (see appendix B). Field notes were recorded throughout the interview process. Interviews were coded into themes using content analysis. Content analysis is the description of the content of communication that allows researchers to quantify qualitative findings from open-ended interview questions (Krippendorff, 1989). Two themes were created before the interview process: 1) barriers and 2) facilitators. Eight barriers and twelve facilitators were organized into sub-themes. Themes are easily found from repetitive concepts or phrases about a certain topic or phenomenon (Bradley, et al., 2007; Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Tables 2 and 3 show the sub-themes, number of occurrences, total number of participants experiencing the sub-theme, and an example of the theme. Repetition of responses suggests that the study reached saturation.

V. Findings

Theme 1: Barriers. Most individuals understand the importance of attending wellness programs, however, some barriers prevent individuals from accessing wellness centers. Barriers are conceptualized as anything that prevents an individual from accessing wellness programs, activities, and events. Barriers can be experienced at the personal, social, and environmental levels. The whole-person wellness model emphasizes the importance of keeping the person at the center of intellectual, physical, social, emotional, vocational, and spiritual wellness, therefore each individual experiences barriers to wellness in different ways. The absence of one or more of the domains of the whole-person wellness model creates barriers that prevent access to wellness programs. Eight sub-themes emerged from this study including 1) lack of motivation, 2) other
activities, 3) physical limitations, 4) fear, 5) geographical proximity, 6) weather, 7) class structure, and 8) caregiving (see table 2).

Sub-theme 1: Lack of Motivation. This barrier is conceptualized as not having the desire or losing the motivation to attend activities at the wellness center. Eleven participants exemplified lack of motivation. Many of the participants who mentioned this barrier expressed a sense of defeat for not having the desire to attend activities at the wellness center. One cause of lack of motivation is the difficulty to get up and get moving in the morning. Some individuals laughed when they mentioned that they were too “lazy” to get up in the morning or the classes were too early for them. They found humor in the pleasure of sleeping in and relaxing instead of attending the wellness center. Although some found it humorous, others mentioned the total loss of desire to attend. These individuals expressed disappointment due to negative health outcomes such as gaining weight. Although they experienced weight-gain, they still understood the importance of wellness. Husband 2 explains lack of motivation in this way… “Well, I had open-heart surgery and my sister got me to join and uh, they said I could never come off these two medicines I was on and uh, I started coming and then I came off two of them medicines and I lost weight and I was really enthused. Here lately…I’ve lost…I don’t know if I’m getting tired…I used to work out. I spend more time playing cards now than I do working out, so I need to get back to working out more….just one day I got up and I didn’t feel like doing stuff no more…. I’ve gotten in a lazy spot somehow and I need to get out of it, because I’ve gained a little bit of weight here lately.” Husband 2 understands the importance of attending the wellness center, because he remembers losing weight and coming off some medications. However, he became disappointed when he no longer felt like going to the wellness center.

Boredom is also associated with lack of motivation. Member 12 discusses the boredom of exercise, especially on her elliptical in her home. Although she had access to an elliptical at home, she did not have the interest in exercising alone. She explains it in this way… “No, I waited about four months and then at that time I was…I had an elliptical at home and I still have it, but anyhow, I would work on that for like 40 minutes, but then I would get tired and say, “I’m not going to do that today.” And I would skip a lot of days, so… I think it was boring there. Even though I had the television on, I put it in front of the television…it still was boring. I just couldn’t
wait until 20 minutes was up or whatever...I got a little lazy...I didn’t feel like doing much.” Although she tried to be active for 20 minutes a day, she did not find meaning in exercising alone in front of the television. Member 12 is now a regular attendee in the group fitness classes at the wellness center, which has motivated her to stay active. She described the difference between her elliptical and the group fitness classes in this way... “When I learned about [the wellness center] ...I got something through my insurance company in the mail and that’s when I thought, “I’ll just try it.” And that’s when I called and tried...I mean, no one makes fun of you if you make a mistake...they just kind of push you along and you have fun with it......they keep you alive.” Member 12 is an example of someone who overcame lack of motivation to try something new, which meant joining the wellness center and participating in “fun” group fitness classes.

Sub-theme 2: Other Activities. Eight participants described situations where other activities prevented attendance to the wellness center. Other activities are conceptualized as events, organizations, or projects, outside of the wellness center, that prevent individuals from attending activities within the wellness center. An example of this type of activity is an obligation with another organization. Wife 1 says, “I try to schedule around if I can, you know, unless it’s an emergency. The only other thing is back around Christmas, I was doing that mission work with Hands Against Hunger. We had stuff going on.” Finding time to attend the wellness center was not easy when other meaningful events were taking place. Another barrier is travel. Although traveling is a barrier, one participant tried to find a way to move her joints and muscles while she traveled. Even though this helped, she believed that she “should” participate in the strengthening classes at the wellness center. She expressed enjoyment in traveling with her significant other, but she also understood the importance of staying active during long journeys. Member 19 says, “It’s a reason I should be doing the strengthening. But it’s also the reason I am not doing it, because I’m never here...Now, [my significant other] understands that I need to get out and walk. I can’t sit for long periods of time, so we stop at almost every rest area we come to and we walk around the car or we walk around the rest area...uhm, we got out...we stopped...I don’t even know where it is. We stopped at the rest area and walked around the car three times with me. He’s had triple bi-pass, so he needs to get out and walk too. So we try to walk when we can, but sometimes my hips hurt or my back hurts or whatever it is that’s bothering me hurts...it’s hard to walk, but I try to do it anyway.” Member 19 suffers from chronic hip and
hamstring pain, however, she always finds a way to move. She specifically enjoys the water aerobics classes at the wellness center.

Sub-theme 3: Physical Limitations. The most common barrier to attending the wellness center is physical limitation. Fourteen participants experienced a physical limitation that kept them from participating in exercise or other activities at the wellness center. A physical limitation is conceptualized as any disease or disability that creates complications (such as pain or stiffness) that prevent or discourage individuals from participating in wellness activities. Many physical limitations are in relation to chronic disease or illness. Member 14 says, “I don’t get as stiff normally as I have in the past. I still have some stiffness if I sit too long...Some of my health issues sometimes might prevent me from coming...I have diabetes. I have non-alcoholic liver disease...I have a fatty liver, but it could be from the diabetes, I don’t know for sure...In September, I was in the hospital for several days, ‘cause I had an upper GI bleed, so...uh, but knock on wood that was the first and only time I had that, but I mean, it’s nothing that...some days I just don’t feel up to doing...I have glaucoma.” Although she has experienced negative health conditions leading to physical limitations, she enjoys attending the water fitness classes, because her limitations become less of an issue in the water. Member 14 says, “I have never liked land classes. I don’t like the fact of, I feel like I am doing the same exercises in the water and it’s easier to do for me...I think it’s helped with my balance a lot...I don’t get as stiff normally as I have in the past.” Nearly all of the participants mentioned some type of physical limitation as a barrier to attending wellness activities, but they also mentioned their physical limitations as motivators that remind them to continue moving. Like Member 14, other members mentioned the benefits of moving to reduce stiffness and increase balance. Member 14 expressed accomplishment when she described losing weight and reducing some of the limitations associated with her health conditions.

Sub-theme 4: Fear. This barrier is commonly a result of a negative past experience. Some members talked about their fear of falling or injury, because they had recently experienced those events. Five participants mentioned the fear of staying active after an injury that they experienced prior to joining the wellness center. Falling was the most common form of fear among participants. Member 21 explains, “I don’t know. Being afraid, I think. I am so fearful,
because I was in so much pain for so long...I’m so afraid of that happening again, you know.”

Member 21 will no longer participate in anything other than water classes. She says, “For me [I attend the water classes] because of my joints, and you know, like I said...if I wouldn’t have had this, if I wouldn’t have done a water program, I wouldn’t have exercised again...and that’s the truth. That’s how fearful I am of taking a Jazzercise class. Now, I am sure you could just go take a regular exercise class...Exercise classes, though, bore me. Just...I want music and I want to be moving... I feel safe and I am a swimmer and the water doesn’t bother me. You know, where some people might be fearful of water, because they never were around it...I grew up around water...we grew up on the lake and we are at a lake all the time and I am not fearful of water at all.” Member 21 is eager to participate in the water classes, because they motivate her to continue to move without the fear of injuring her pelvis again.

Another member discusses the fear of falling in a different way. Member 10 is grateful for the opportunity to attend a balance academy that is structured to help her strengthen her balance, coordination, and stability. This academy offers weekly balance classes and private balance assessments. Member 10 shared that this was her favorite class at the wellness center, but she seemed hesitant, because she feared losing her balance and falling again. She says, “Oh boy, that main thing that he does in there...when you have to lean, go, that scares me. But then I sort of am getting more trustworthy of him and I know he’s back there. He’s not going to let me fall and that’s all I’d change...Now the girl that left here...I didn’t trust her. She said she was always right behind me, but once I looked out the corner of my eye and I didn’t have anybody holding on...she was standing there writing something and that scared me...so that’s the only complaint I’ve ever had about this place...so anyway, then I got [another instructor] and he’s been my favorite.” Member 10 talks about the importance of trusting the instructor and feeling safe during the balance assessment sessions. When she received a new instructor, she felt safe and more comfortable. If trust is not present, fear can prevent people from participating in activities at the wellness center. Another type of fear is not understanding how to use the machines for independent exercise. Member 2 explains, “I really haven’t done the equipment here. I’ve done the equipment at another location, and I’m pleased with those. These are kind of frightening, because they’re newer and I haven’t been trained on them yet.” Member 2 is afraid
of not knowing how to use the newer equipment, therefore she decides not to go into the weight room.

**Sub-theme 5: Geographical Proximity.** Geographical proximity acts as both a barrier and facilitator. This concept is defined as the distance an individual lives from the wellness center. People who live at a farther distance from the wellness center find it more difficult to attend. Four participants mentioned proximity as a barrier to attending the wellness center. All four participants said that they would attend the wellness center more regularly if they lived a little closer. One could argue that geographical proximity can be controlled by the individual, however, some individuals may be bound to one location for personal reasons. Regardless of the reasoning, individuals believed that if they lived closer, they would be able to participate in more activities. Member 9 says, “I wish there were more classes that I could do in...back to back rather than going and coming back. I mean I know there’s other things in the afternoon, but, uh, it’s not convenient to come back and forth.” Member 21 also talks about how proximity prevents her from trying new activities...“I tried a yoga class and I did try...in the beginning I was trying a couple different things to see. I think I would do more if, like, but I feel like...we are about 20 minutes away...then I feel like every day of the week I am on the road...I wish I lived closer...Otherwise...I think that if I was five minutes away or ten minutes away...I think maybe I would even come more often...” Member 21 lives too far away to be able to go home and drive back, just like Member 9. Both members expressed the desire to have more opportunities to try multiple activities in one trip to the wellness center.

**Sub-theme 6: Weather.** Weather is defined as any uncontrollable environmental condition that prevents individuals from attending the wellness center. The only type of weather condition individuals mentioned was snow or ice. Six participants discussed weather as a barrier that kept them away from coming to the wellness center. The icy roads, snowy atmosphere, and cold conditions are all reasons participants do not feel comfortable traveling to the wellness center. Member 18 explains, “Winter time...I find winter time...sometimes I say, “Oh, it’s so cold, I can’t imagine putting on a bathing suit and getting out in this cold.” But in the summer, I’ll be here...The thing that would just absolutely be a no-no is icy weather. I will not travel when the roads are bad.” Member 13 begins laughing as she tells a story of how the weather recently
affected her travels to the wellness center... "You know, I know that are a little reclusive, especially in this weather... that one Tuesday... not last week, the week before. I shouldn’t have come out, but I did and my husband says, “Go, oh go. It will be fine.” And it was, but it was slipperier than I thought as I got closer and I really don’t think it’s smart to go out in weather and take a chance with yourself or anybody else.” Although she decided to drive in the bad weather, she quickly noticed how dangerous the roads were and decided not to make that mistake again.

Sub-theme 7: Class Structure. Eight participants mentioned class structure as a barrier to attendance. Class structure is defined as the time, method, and organization of the group fitness classes. One major barrier is the number of people inside the pool during an exercise class. Some participants thought the aqua classes were too crowded. Some people wished the classes lasted longer than forty-five minutes. Husband & Wife 1 mentioned changing the time from forty-five minutes to sixty minutes... “I sometimes wish we could go an hour, you know... I thought, man, this goes too quick, an hour would be good.” Others would like to be able to come a little later on Saturdays and also on Sundays, but the wellness center is closed during those times. Husband 1 says, “Sometimes I’d like maybe to come up on Saturdays, maybe a little later in their day.”

Member 14 discusses another barrier... “One of the drawbacks before was the fact that we never had a permanent instructor. We had more... everybody would take a turn... we had [one guy] or we’d have [another girl] and one girl left and took a position with the company... and then we had a lady who I see her every now and then, she may still teach a class, I don’t know... everybody has different ways of doing it, so it was kind of hard to adjust. I don’t like a whole lot of change. I like things to kind of... I know what to expect.” Member 14 explained this drawback with some frustration. She would prefer that the classes have the same instructors each week to help form consistency.

Sub-theme 8: Caregiving/Family Obligations. Twelve participants mentioned some form of caregiving or had other family obligations that prevented them from attending the wellness center. Many are grandparents taking care of grandchildren or caregivers for spouses or parents. Sometimes taking kids to or picking kids up from school interfered with attending the wellness center. Member 9 explains, My son works a rotating shift and he’s home with her until she goes
to school at 1:30 and if he has to go to work before she goes to school then I get her and like tomorrow, I get both the kids and I have to get my grandson off to school and I’m going to miss the early morning classes, because I can’t take them.” Some participants are taking care of loved ones with serious conditions including heart disease, Alzheimer’s disease, and ALS. Member 13 talks about her experience caring for her daughter-in-law who has ALS. She not only talks about how she can help her daughter-in-law, but also how she needs to be physically stronger to be able to care for her daughter-in-law’s needs. She says, “I got a lot of grandchildren. We run kids...they are all close, so we run kids wherever they need to go. The one with ALS has three kids. The oldest is 17, he drives, and then 15 and then 13, so whatever we need to do as far as taking wherever they need to go. So we are depended on. There are two other kids that we had before school all our lives, because they live close for the bus and things like that. We’re depended on for simple things, but you know, grandparent things... I have to be strong...” Member 13 mentions several times that she is “depended on” by her family members, which shows the importance of her caregiving role.

Table 2. Barriers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-themes</th>
<th>Occurrences</th>
<th>Total Participants</th>
<th>Example</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Lack of motivation</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>“Well, I had open-heart surgery and my sister got me to join and uh, they said I could never come off these two medicines I was on and uh, I started coming and then I came off two of them medicines and I lost weight and I was really enthused. Here lately…I’ve lost…I don’t know if I’m getting tired…I used to work out. I spend more time playing cards now than I do working out, so I need to get back to working out more….just one day I got up and I didn’t feel like doing stuff no more…. I’ve gotten in a lazy spot somehow and I need to get out of it, because I’ve gained a little bit of weight here lately.” – Husband 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>2) Other Activities</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>“It’s a reason I should be doing the strengthening. But it’s also the reason I am not doing it, because I’m never here…Now, he understands that I need to get out and walk. I can’t sit for long periods of time, so we stop at almost every rest area we come to and we walk around the car or we walk around the rest area…uhm, we got out…we stopped…I don’t even know where it is. We stopped at the rest area and walked around the car three times with me. He’s had triple bi-pass, so he needs to get out and walk too. So we try to walk when we can, but sometimes my hips hurt or my back hurts or whatever it is that’s bothering me hurts…it’s hard to walk, but I try to do it anyway.” – Member 19</td>
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</tbody>
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| 3) Physical Limitations     | 19          | 14                 | “I don’t get as stiff normally as I have in the past. I still have some stiffness if I sit too long…Some of my health issues sometimes might prevent me from coming…I have diabetes. I have non-alcoholic liver disease…I have a fatty liver, but it could be from the diabetes, I don’t know for sure…In September, I was in the hospital
for several days, ‘cause I had an upper GI bleed, so…uh, but knock on wood that was the first and only time I had that, but I mean, it’s nothing that…some days I just don’t feel up to doing…I have glaucoma.” – Member 14

| 4) Fear   | 5 | 5 | “Oh boy, that main thing that he does in there…when you have to leave, go, that scares me. But then I sort of am getting more trustworthy of him and I know he’s back there. He’s not going to let me fall and that’s all I’d change…Now the girl that left here…I didn’t trust her. She said she was always right behind me, but once I looked out the corner of my eye and I didn’t have anybody holding on…she was standing there writing something and that scared me…so that’s the only complaint I’ve ever had about this place…so anyway, then I got [a new instructor] and he’s been my favorite.” – Member 10 |
| 5) Geographical proximity | 4 | 4 | “I tried a yoga class and I did try…in the beginning I was trying a couple different things to see. I think I would do more if, like, but I feel like…we are about 20 minutes away…then I feel like every day of the week I am on the road…I wish I lived closer…Otherwise… I think that if I was five minutes away or ten minutes away…I think maybe I would even come more often…” – Member 21 |
| 6) Weather | 11 | 6 | “Winter time…I find winter time…sometimes I say, “Oh, it’s so cold, I can’t imagine putting on a bathing suit and getting out in this cold.” But in the summer, I’ll be here…The thing that would just absolutely be a no-no is icy weather. I will not travel when the roads are bad.” – Member 18 |
| 7) Class Structure | 5 | 8 | “One of the drawbacks before was the fact that we ever had a permanent instructor. We had more…everybody would take a turn…one girl left and took a position with the company…and then we had a lady who I see her every now and then, she may still teach a class. I don’t know…everybody has different ways of doing it, so it was kind of hard to adjust. I don’t like a whole lot of change. I like things to kind of…I know what to expect.” – Member 14 |
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Theme 2: Facilitators. Facilitators are conceptualized as anything that promotes individual access to the wellness center. Like barriers, facilitators are experienced differently across the group of participants. The facilitators include 1) getting into a routine, 2) seeing results, 3) feeling better, 4) determination, 5) health maintenance, 6) social relationships, 7) instructors, 8) atmosphere, 9) SilverSneakers, 10) doctor’s recommendation, 11) water classes, and 12) geographical proximity.

Sub-theme 9: Routine. The first example of a personal facilitator is maintaining a routine. A routine is defined as a schedule of events that promote regular participation in wellness activities. A routine is a habit, which means it is more difficult to break. Thirteen participants
emphasized the importance of maintaining a routine at the wellness center. Having the same routine encouraged them to stay motivated and participate in activities. Not only do people form a routine, but they also begin planning other activities around their routine at the wellness center. Wife 4 explained the importance of making sure her husband got to the wellness center, even if she had another obligation. Most of the time, she schedules her appointments around their wellness center routine, too. Her husband is still recovering from frequent heart attacks and other cardiovascular-related issues, so she understands the importance of making sure he attends the wellness center. She explains, “No, even if we have a doctor’s appointment, we work around it. We only have one vehicle, so if necessary, if I have an appointment, I will drop him off, go do my appointment and come back and do my...you know, we just work around it.” Member 13 describes how she uses the trip to the wellness center as a way to get all of her errands done for the day… “I mean I can’t take advantage, like afternoon 5’oclock or anything, I’m a morning person, so I just get here and do my thing and I’m all clean, I’m all fresh. I go to the groceries. Whatever’s on Main Street, you know, I stop around whatever I need to, ‘cause I am 10 miles from Main Street and I do my nails at [a local nail place].”

Members also shared how they would miss the wellness center if they got out of their routine for a day…Member 22 says, “I just got into a routine. It’s just something that I think is good for me. Right now it’s part of my daily routine. If I can’t make it, I sorta miss it, you know?” The wellness center becomes an important part of his day, which motivates him to continue attending each week, so he doesn’t miss anything. Member 22 has helped lead a spinning class at the wellness center and he is never misses his land fitness classes. Here’s how he explains his journey to finding a routine at the wellness center… “They changed the circuit class that was only one class at 10:00, they changed it to two classes...because the class size was so big. You know, it...and when I started going back over in 2014 I just did spinning, I didn’t do any circuit, but I enjoyed it so much that I made it...and I know they was offering it over here on Tuesday and Thursday, so I made a commitment to myself and I said, “Hey, I want to go Tuesday and Thursday...I am going to start this circuit class.” And I have been doing it ever since. I missed the first week of January 2015, but I haven’t missed ever since, you know.”
Sub-theme 10: Seeing Results. Seventeen people talked about seeing results after attending the wellness center. Some of the results include weight loss, better health outcomes, muscle tone, better balance, more endurance, and more flexibility, and better range of motion. After participants noticed results, they found motivation to continue attending the wellness center. Member 21 compares herself to her friends and mentions how the wellness center has helped prevent chronic disease. Whenever Member 21 goes on a medical visit, her results are encouraging. She speaks with a sense of accomplishment as she describes her medical visits in this way… “Whenever I go for my check-up and I see my numbers, I feel like this has got to be helping with those, because the majority of my friends on all these medications…their blood pressure, they have diabetes and I think this has helped me. I have nothing. I mean, I don’t have any of that at all…none. And I do feel like exercising over the years…I mean, even when the kids were little, it seems like I was always going and doing an exercise class somewhere.” Other participants mention the results as motivators in helping them create a healthier lifestyle outside of the wellness center. Member 3 discusses the benefits of losing weight and keeping it off. It has changed her perspective of what it means to live a healthier life… “I have lost weight, I’m keeping it off, and I am continuing to lose weight. I’ve seen improvement in my attitude, improvement in my lifestyle, ‘cause I want to eat better and live better.”

Sub-theme 11: Feeling Better. Many people attend the wellness center, because they feel better after participating in a wellness activity. Fifteen people talked about feeling better as a result of attending the wellness center. Some shared stories of how pain and complications with physical limitations are gradually decreasing. Member 20 talks about the complications of back surgery and how she used to have problems with her arm “I have more energy when I do this. I am more agile. After my back surgery I was having problems with this right arm, but now it’s better.” Like Member 20, others talked about feeling rejuvenated or energized. Member 18 says, “Because, I love being in the water. I love the exercises. I just feel so energized and lifted up and I love being with people. Yesterday was so uplifting. Everybody was like…: I just love the people. I love the feeling. I just feel more energized when I Leave here. I mean, I wake up and I’m like, “Oh dear, I don’t know if I really want to go.” And then I come in and I exercise and I’m ready to go for the day.” Like Member 18, other people do not feel like attending the wellness center due to some barriers, but if they decide to attend the wellness center, they feel so much better.
Sub-theme 12: Determination. This facilitator encourages people to get up in the morning and come to the wellness center. Determination is the willpower within the individual that gives them the strength to overcome barriers and the courage to pursue their goals. Twelve people exemplified determination as a way to overcome lack of motivation. Member 5 says, “Because I decide I am going to go. It’s all about deciding. Nobody has personal barriers that keep them away. If they tell you that, they’re lying...people are wimps.” Determination can also be created from the motivation of others. Member 10 talked about her daughter’s influence on her decision to attend the wellness center. She said that her daughter is always encouraging her to get up and stay moving. Member 10 is determined to attend the wellness center every day so she can make her daughter proud. Her daughter shared this quote with her one day... “Are you gonna sit here and look out the window and watch those cars go by, ‘cause they’re gonna go by with you or without you, now do you want to get out on the road and do you wanna go with them or you gonna sit in that chair and cry the rest of your life?” This quote is powerful to Member 10 and she often references it when she is feeling a lack of motivation, so she carries it close to her heart. Some people are determined to stay active and healthy. Member 18 says, “Actually, until I look in the mirror...when you say 87, I look around to see who you are talking about. And, I would say...emotionally...and psychologically I am about where I was when I was 45. Because, I believe the spirit never grows old, but our bodies will. It’s true...the spirit doesn’t grow old and if I listen to my spirit, then I am not going to be growing old and decrepit, I want to keep moving on... So, if I feel 45, I know I don’t look it...but I try to dress it...I eat well, I want to be active, I want to get off the couch and enjoy life.”

Sub-theme 13: Health Maintenance. Some individuals want to prevent disease and maintain their health by attending the wellness center. Twelve people explained how the wellness center has helped them maintain their health over the years. Member 19 explains, “If I don’t come, physically I suffer with the arthritis and tight muscles and I have too many things to do to let those govern my life...both hips are not mine, so I don’t want to take the chance that I am going to mess up either one of them, but I want to keep the muscles around them strong. Strength training, I should be doing...Because the rest of my life would be crap. I mean...I can see if I didn’t keep active and keep stretching and keep moving, I can see that I would become
immobile. I mean, this arthritis in my back would freeze me up. And, uh, I watched my husband do that and I don't want to do it.” Member 19 obtains her desire to remain healthy from her experience caregiving for her husband. She watched her husband live through tremendous physical limitations that required her to care for many of his activities of daily living (ADLs). Member 19 wants to remain active, so that she does not have to experience the physical limitations her husband endured due to his chronic diseases. Another member relies on the water to help her maintain health. Member 18 says, “Uhm, well...to be happier, to be...I do have back problems. I feel like if I can build up my core and get rid of this belly fat, I can...I don’t want to be taking pain pills and, uh...I want to be more, uhm, I want to be more active in my life. I want to be able to...We all come to be healed or improve our health and a lot of times I like to say, “I’m going in the pool of Bethesda to be healthy.” And I see somebody in there that might need a little help in the health department and I ask God to heal them.”

Sub-theme 14: Social Relationships. The most common facilitator is social relationships. Social relationships are at the core of the wellness center in southwestern Ohio. Nineteen of the 26 participants mentioned social relationships as one of the most important elements of the wellness center. Many people described their group fitness classes as a place where people experience comradery. Members of the wellness center have become more than friends, they lift one another up with encouragement. Member 9 explains, “If the other people in the class weren’t there I would not attend as often. The comradery...people are expecting me there and when I’m not there, they are concerned as to where I am or if I’m sick or something like that so I go whether I really want to or not.” The comradery encourages Member 9 to attend the wellness center even when she is not feeling like it. She attends, because she knows that people are expecting her to be there.

The social relationships created within the wellness center are extended outside of the center as people spend time together through other activities. Member 20 says, “I’ve met people that I knew years ago, you know, so you picked up those relationships and just like we’re talking about the first Wednesday of every month we are going to go to [a restaurant] and eat, you know, and I think that will be fun.” The relationships created become more like family than friends. Member 9 says, “There are people that are my age and people that I have gotten to
know through the years. Some of them I have known for a long time and some of them I’ve just met since I came, but they’ve become family.” At the core of these relationships is love, as member 22 experienced. He says, “I just like the comradery over here. I have a Planet Fitness within three minutes from me, but I come over here and do the...I have met a lot of people here that I used to know years back and I have met a lot of new friends here and I like the idea of the age limit versus Planet Fitness would be cheaper, but there’s a lot younger people there, I’m positive. I have made a lot of friends here. When me and my wife first started, she did too. We both really enjoyed it. I was very impressed at the night of the visitation, the number of people that we have met through [the wellness center] that showed at the visitation. I was very impressed with that. It just shows how well she was liked and how well he liked me...great people over here. I mean spinning and the socializing...I think it goes together...” The social relationships and comradery at the wellness center have encouraged many to continue attending.

Sub-theme 15: Instructors. Along with the social relationships among members, there is also a relationship between the members and instructors. Ten participants discussed how the instructors influenced their experience at the wellness center. Members mention that the instructor motivates them with a positive spirit. Many members described the instructors as friendly, helpful, and respectful. Member 19 explains, “I mean [all of the instructors], there are a couple of them that I don’t know...well, I know [her] and I know [him]...you know, it’s just...they all know you...they all ask about you...they all want to know how everything is...they all stay in touch. I mean, just like this thing with [one couple]...I mean...you care about other people and so that comes through as instructors as well as class members.” Not only do members believe the instructors are personable, but they also value the knowledge and experience that each instructor encompasses. Wife 3 says, “They know what they’re doing. Even if they have a sub come in, they all know what to do.” The members explain how the instructors go above and beyond. Member 22 says, “[Instructor] is a super guy and one thing that he...he gave me a bouquet of flowers to put on my wife’s tombstone. I mean, the guy is tremendous...I will probably never forget that.”

Sub-theme 16: Atmosphere. Seventeen people mentioned the atmosphere of the wellness center. Many people described the cleanliness, organization, and comfort of the wellness center.
Wife 1 says, "With everybody being older, like we are, you don’t feel intimidated or you don’t feel funny getting in a bathing suit like you would at maybe the YMCA where there’s a lot of young, buffed up people." Member 19 also explains why she chooses the wellness center instead of another facility close by. She says, "I don’t know that there’s anything... the staff has been...I mean when [the director] set this up, she really had a vision and...she envisioned possibilities for everybody, so I really...since [she’s] gone and the whole upstairs has changed...well, [the new coordinator] seems to be running it the way [both of them]...however the hierarchy is anymore, I don’t know. But you still seem to be addressing the entire population. [The travel lady] is doing the trips and things...address those who get out and want to get out and want to go, but they don’t want to drive. They don’t want to have to park...you know, it’s so easy to do it that way. You know...the games that they have encourage people to take part and to get involved in the...this two-month marathon thing is wonderful...I wouldn’t join the Y, because the water’s cold. Well, when you have arthritis, you can’t...you’re not going to benefit as much if you’re...that warm water is awesome. I don’t know, my experience at the Y when I was young was like...it was just too busy. This is just more my pace. I wouldn’t go to Planet Fitness, because it’s a mill...it’s a fitness mill. I would be like everybody else and quit the end of January, because it just gets boring...you gotta break it up, you gotta do things differently. You can’t just...decide, well, “I’m going to walk a mile every day” ... you know, it’s not going to work. You’re going to have to break it up. You have to change it.”

Member 17 talks about the importance of the variety of classes in response to a diverse group of people with varying health conditions. She says, "I think you need a variety of programs here, because you have a variety of people who are in a variety of stages in their lives. You have to offer different programs to please different people and who want different activities." Overall, the atmosphere is inviting and comfortable to meet the needs of a variety of individuals.

**Sub-theme 17: SilverSneakers.** Seven people talked about the importance of having a SilverSneakers membership. SilverSneakers is a benefit that is available for individuals who are 65 or older and have selected a Medicare Advantage plan with the SilverSneakers benefit included. Some Medicare Advantage plans do not include the SilverSneakers benefit, therefore not all people have this benefit. Member 13 says, "After 65, when I got this wonderful...I can’t say enough about this SilverSneakers, and I have actually switched insurances to get it, because
I had it and [my insurance plan] dropped SilverSneakers, boom, I’m out of there. When they dropped, I’m gone. My goal is, of course, I’m with Humana now and as long as they keep, I’m fine...but that’s one of my biggest requirements is this benefit. It’s so wonderful.” – Member 13

Some members chose to come to the wellness center, because other locations did not honor the SilverSneakers benefit, therefore, their membership fee was not free. Husband & Wife 3 previously attended the YMCA until they discovered that the YMCA no longer accepted the SilverSneakers benefit… “Yeah, because we went to the Y and they had it [SilverSneakers] and then they quit having it. And then they tried to put the blame on SilverSneakers and said they wouldn’t pay them as much as they paid somebody else...it was just a rip off, but we had been planning on coming here forever.”

Sub-theme 18: Doctors Recommendation. Many participants are motivated to attend the wellness center, because their doctor has prescribed them to exercise multiple days a week. Ten participants made the decision to attend the wellness center after their doctor recommended exercise a few days a week. Many doctors recommended that their patients attend a water aerobics class to help them build strength and endurance without adding extra pressure onto their joints. One of the most common chronic conditions that participants experience is arthritis. Member 13 explains it this way, “Every doctor, every chiropractor, pain specialist, anybody I’ve gone to, rheumatologist, they say it’s the absolute best thing to do.” Many of the recommendations were for individuals experiencing pain, stiffness, and other side-effects of chronic disease. Member 19 shares her doctor’s recommendations… “Well, the stretching moves the arthritic joints in my back. Uhm, stretching my hamstring helps a great deal. Uhm, my saddlebags...my doctor told me that I should stand by the kitchen counter and do the side leg lifts. When I had my hips replaced. He said that’s what I should be doing... And the current doctor, whole-heartedly recommends the water.”

Sub-theme 19: Water Exercises. Many gyms do not have a pool that is created to help older adults cope with the side-effects of chronic disease. The pool at the wellness center is saltwater, and heated to help with joint pain and stiffness. The water classes are among the most popular classes for the participants in this study. Water classes allow members to do more activities with lower impact than they can in a land class. Nine people emphasized the many
benefits of the water classes. Member 18 talked about being able to jump in the water. This is something should could not do on land. She also talks about how good the water feels on her muscles and joints. She says, “Yeah! I jump out of that pool like a frog. But, Uh, I don’t jump too high anymore on land. I have become a frog instead of a toad... When I am in the water I feel... I just feel like satin... When I am [swimming] after exercising, I am just like “Ah, this is awesome.”” The water classes help people overcome the fear of falling. Husband 3 talks about his experience with his recovery after a fall... “I fell and broke my hip and I had rods and pins put in there and I was at the Y then and I went in there in a walker and about three or four days in the water and I was off that walker. I tell people all the time, if they have a knee replacement, to get in the water.” The water helped him to regain strength and confidence so he could recover quicker.

Sub-theme 20: Geographical Proximity. Again, this sub-theme can be presented as a barrier or a facilitator. Individuals who lived closer to the wellness center had better access to the activities. The closer people live, the more motivated they are to attend the wellness center. Eight participants mentioned that living close to the wellness center helps motivate them to attend. Some people talked about the convenience of living so close to the wellness center. Member 8 says, “It’s five minutes from my home.” Member 1 also says, “We live closer and it’s a straight shot with the car.” Again, geographical proximity is not always controlled by the individual, however, many of the individuals who attend the wellness center live in close proximity.

Table 3. Facilitators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-themes</th>
<th>Occurrences</th>
<th>Total Participants</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Routine</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>“I mean I can’t take advantage, like afternoon 5’oclock or anything, I’m a morning person, so I just get here and do my thing and I’m all clean, I’m all fresh. I go to the groceries. Whatever’s on Main Street, you know, I stop around whatever I need to, ‘cause I am 10 miles from Main Street and I do my nails at [the nail place].” – Member 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>Page</td>
<td>Paragraph</td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeing Results</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>“Whenever I go for my check-up and I see my numbers, I feel like this has got to be helping with those, because the majority of my friends on all these medications…their blood pressure, they have diabetes and I think this has helped me. I have nothing. I mean, I don’t have any of that at all…none. And I do feel like exercising over the years…I mean, even when the kids were little, it seems like I was always going and doing an exercise class somewhere.” – Member 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling Better</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Because, I love being in the water. I love the exercises. I just feel so energized and lifted up and I love being with people. Yesterday was so uplifting. Everybody was like…I just love the people. I love the feeling. I just feel more energized when I Leave here. I mean, I wake up and I’m like, “Oh dear, I don’t know if I really want to go.” And then I come in and I exercise and I’m ready to go for the day.” – Member 18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Determination         | 20     | 12   | “Are you gonna sit here and look out the window and watch those cars go by, ‘cause they’re gonna go by with you or without you, now do you want to get out on the road and do you wanna go with them or you gonna sit in that chair and cry the rest of your life?” – Member 10  
“Actually, until I look in the mirror…when you say 87, I look around to see who you are talking about. And, I would say…emotionally….and psychologically I am about where I was when I was 45. Because, I believe the spirit never grows old, but our bodies will. It’s true…the spirit doesn’t grow old and if I listen to my spirit, then I am not going to be growing old and decrepit, I want to keep moving on… So, if I feel 45, I know I don’t look it…but I try to dress it…I eat well, I want to be active, I want to get off the couch and enjoy life.” – Member 18 |
<p>| Health Maintenance    | 19     | 12   | “If I don’t come, physically I suffer with the arthritis and tight muscles and I have too many things to do to let those govern my life…both hips are not mine, so I don’t want to take the chance that I am going to mess up either one of them, but I want to keep the muscles around them strong. Strength training, I should be doing…Because the rest of my life would be crap. I mean…I can see if I didn’t keep active and keep stretching and keep moving, I can see that I would become immobile. I mean, this arthritis in my back would freeze me up. And, uh, I watched my husband do that and I don’t want to do it.” – Member 19 |
| Social Relationships | 40 | 19 | “I just like the comradery over here. I have a Planet Fitness within three minutes from me, but I come over here and do the…I have met a lot of people here that I used to know years back and I have met a lot of new friends here and I like the idea of the age limit versus Planet Fitness would be cheaper, but there’s a lot younger people there, I’m positive. I have made a lot of friends here. When me and my wife first started, she did too. We both really enjoyed it. I was very impressed at the night of the visitation, the number of people that we have met through The wellness center that showed at the visitation. I was very impressed with that. It just shows how well she was liked and how well he liked me…great people over here. I mean spinning and the socializing…I think it goes together…” – <strong>Member 22</strong> |
| Instructors | 14 | 10 | “I mean [all of the instructors], there are a couple of them that I don’t know…well, I know [her] and I know [him]…you know, it’s just…they all know you…they all ask about you…they all want to know how everything is…they all stay in touch. I mean, just like this thing with [one couple]…I mean…[they] care about other people and so that comes through as instructors as well as class members.” – <strong>Member 19</strong> |
| Atmosphere | 22 | 17 | “I don’t know that there’s anything…the staff has been…I mean when [the previous coordinator] set this up, she really had a vision and…she envisioned possibilities for everybody, so I really…since [she’s] gone and the whole upstairs has changed…well, [the new coordinator] seems to be running it the way.. But you still seem to be addressing the entire population. [The trips lady] is doing the trips and things…address those who get out and want to get out and want to go, but they don’t want to drive. They don’t want to have to park…you know, it’s so easy to do it that way. You know…the games that they have encourage people to take part and to get involved in the…this two-month marathon thing is wonderful…I wouldn’t join the Y, because the water’s cold. Well, when you have arthritis, you can’t…you’re not going to benefit as much if you’re…that warm water is awesome. I don’t know, by experience at the Y when I was young was like…it was just too busy. This is just more my pace. I wouldn’t go to Planet Fitness, because it’s a mill…it’s a fitness mill. I would be like everybody else and quit the end of January, because it just gets boring…you gotta break it up, you gotta do things differently. You can’t just…decide, well, “I’m going to walk a mile every day” … you know, it’s not going to work. You’re going to have to break it up. You have to change it.” – <strong>Member 19</strong> |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>SilverSneakers</strong></th>
<th>8</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>“After 65, when I got this wonderful...I can’t say enough about this SilverSneakers, and I have actually switched insurances to get it, because I had it and United dropped SilverSneakers, boom, I’m out of there. When they dropped, I’m gone. My goal is, of course, I’m with Humana now and as long as they keep, I’m fine...but that’s one of my biggest requirements is this benefit. It’s so wonderful.” – Member 13</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Doctor’s Recommendation</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>“Well, the stretching moves the arthritic joints in my back. Uhm, stretching my hamstring helps a great deal. Uhm, my saddlebags...my doctor told me that I should stand by the kitchen counter and do the side leg lifts. When I had my hips replaced. He said that’s what I should be doing... And the current doctor, whole-heartedly recommends the water.” – Member 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Water Classes</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>“I fell and broke my hip and I had rods and pins put in there and I was at the Y then and I went in there in a walker and about three or four days in the water and I was off that walker. I tell people all the time, if they have a knee replacement, to get in the water.” – Husband 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Geographical Proximity</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>“[It’s not difficult to attend The wellness center], because [A friend] lives a half a block from me and he’s in the class and he drives me up.” – Member 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**VI. Discussion**

**Implications.** In order to better understand the barriers that prevent people from attending the wellness center, research must include people who do not regularly attend as well as people who live in other levels of the CCRC. Overall, findings are consistent with prior literature that explores the motivators and barriers associated with wellness programs. Rasinaho et al, found that older adults who engage in physical wellness programs have fewer chronic diseases, less pain associated with physical limitations and better management of chronic diseases (2006). Other motivators that encourage people to remain active include desire to improve health, notice positive impacts, accomplishment, encouragement from others, and positive experiences with health instructors (Greenwood-Hickman, et al., 2015). The facilitators emerging from this study include 1) finding a routine, 2) seeing results, 3) feeling better, 4) determination, 5) health maintenance, 6) social relationships, 7) instructors, 8) atmosphere, 9) SilverSneakers benefit, 10) doctor’s recommendation, 11) water classes, and 12) geographical proximity. Findings are also consistent with the barriers that prevent participation in other studies which include poor health,
fear of falling or injury, lack of social supports, program costs, lack of awareness, experience with exercise methods, lack of motivation, low energy, and time constraints (Rasinaho, Hirvensalo, Leinonen, Lintunen, & Rantanen, 2006; Rimmer, Wang, & Smith, 2008; Resnick & D’Adamo, 2007). Barriers emerging from this study include 1) lack of motivation, 2) other activities, 3) physical limitations, 4) fear, 5) geographical proximity, 6) weather, 7) class structure, and 8) caregiving.

The most influential facilitators are social relationships. This is consistent with the social wellness domain of the whole-person wellness model (Montague, 1994). Another facilitator, feeling better after attending the wellness center, is consistent with emotional and physical wellness from the whole-person wellness model (Montague, 1994). The most common barrier is physical limitations; however, this barrier is overcome by the water fitness classes. The wellness center successfully facilitates physical wellness, because many of the participants described how the water fitness classes reduce physical limitations (such as pain, unstable balance, and joint stiffness). Caregiving / family obligations is another barrier emerging from this study. Emotional wellness is being able to cope with stressful life events. The stress of supporting a loved one could be reduced if the wellness center created programs to promote emotional wellness. This barrier is also buffered by social relationships. In this study, social relationships help to create a sense of comradery to encourage individuals to attend the wellness center.

Lack of motivation is another barrier that prevents people from attending the wellness center. This barrier is reduced with self-determination, which is a facilitator in this study. Self-determination is an example of spiritual wellness, which is consistent with the whole-person wellness model (Montague, et al., 2002). Participating in other activities that prevent individuals from attending the wellness center is another common barrier found in this study. Many activities include volunteering and other service projects, which is consistent with the vocational domain of the whole-person wellness model (Montague, et al., 2002). SilverSneakers is found to be a motivator that allows people to gain free membership and access to some fitness classes at the wellness center. This theme emerges as a facilitator, but not as a barrier, which is surprising. One explanation is that the participants in the current study who do not have SilverSneakers can afford to pay out-of-pocket. Another explanation is that people may be unaware of the
SilverSneakers benefit. The wellness center could increase the emphasis on intellectual wellness domain, from Montague’s whole-person wellness model, to help people become educated about benefits associated with their Medicare plans.

The wellness center is successful in helping members gain social and physical health, but there needs to be greater focus on a whole-person wellness model to include all six domains of wellness. Spiritual wellness emerges through the individuals experiencing self-determination, but is not specifically mentioned by the participants in this study. The missing domains of vocational, emotional, and intellectual wellness could provide solutions to reducing some of the barriers that prevent people from attending the wellness center. In order to promote personal wellness, the current three-dimensional wellness model at the wellness center should be replaced by the six-dimensional whole-person wellness model (Montague et al., 2002). The whole-person wellness model is a great way to structure an organization to promote personal wellness.

Limitations. First, the participants in this study are all members of the wellness center who attend at least twice per week. The majority of older adults are sedentary and do not participate in wellness activities (Greenwood-Hickman, et al., 2015; Schutzer & Graves, 2004). Therefore, this sample is not representative of older adults in southwestern Ohio. The individuals in this study are different than the average older adult, who spends 8-11 hours per day in a sedentary state (Greenwood-Hickman, et al., 2015). One explanation is that these individuals have the resources and ability to regularly attend the wellness center. Another explanation is that the regular attendees have overcome barriers to be able to make the wellness center a priority. One explanation of how these individuals have overcome barriers is that they have found facilitators that motivate them enough to encourage them to come to the wellness center. For example, physical limitations are barriers that prevent people from participating in wellness activities, but water classes help relieve some of the physical limitations such as pain and stiffness. The water classes motivate people to attend despite the side effects of their chronic disease. Second, the participants in this study are all living independently within the community or in condos within the continuing care retirement community (CCRC). Because this wellness center is attached to a CCRC, it is important to explore the barriers and facilitators for individuals at the other levels of care including assisted living and memory care units. Third, a convenience sampling method
was used in this study. What is different about the people who elected to participate in the study? One explanation is that those who participated may already be more active within the wellness center than those who did not participate in the study. Finally, the background information questionnaire did not ask the participants if they are SilverSneakers eligible or not. Individuals who are not eligible could be individuals who do not participate in the wellness center due to the cost of membership. Further research must investigate the reasons that people do not attend the wellness center.

VII. Recommendations

1) Emotional Wellness: Creating support groups for individuals struggling with depression or anxiety, coping with a loss, transitioning to retirement, or caregiving for a loved one is one way to promote emotional wellness. A program to support caregivers or grandparents caring for children / grandchildren, while they participate in the wellness center, is another example of emotional support. This program would be designed to give these individuals a break from caring for a loved one. This type of program would help people find time to participate in wellness activities, while the care-receiver participates in another beneficial program (such as an intergenerational art program, called Opening Minds through Art) at the wellness center (Lokon, 2008). A final way to promote emotional wellness is to create a seasonal schedule to encourage individuals to overcome the winter months. The schedule could include classes structured to get people up and moving despite the cold, uneasy weather. The wellness center could also create incentives for individuals who participate during the winter months.

2) Vocational Wellness: Programs to support vocational wellness include opportunities to volunteer within the community or in other meaningful organizations. The wellness center could team up a philanthropic organizations to provide members with the opportunity to serve others. Creating classes to help people manage instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs) is another example of promoting vocational wellness. Some example of IADLs include medication management, shopping trips, and financial planning.

3) Intellectual Wellness: Creating weekly discussion groups that focus on important world events, social issues, and other popular topics is one way to promote intellectual wellness.
Another example of supporting intellectual wellness is hosting life-long learning courses once a month on various topics (for example, science, literature, or management courses). Another way to promote intellectual wellness is through intergenerational programs. Older and younger adults could exchange resources to teach and mentor one another in various ways. This program could be offered in a class setting once a month. Another way to facilitate intellectual wellness is by creating an in-home wellness packet for individuals who are not able to attend the wellness center (due to weather, other activities, or caregiving). The packet would include exercises for all six domains of Montague’s whole-person wellness model. A final way to encourage intellectual wellness is through educational programs that help individuals understand the basics of Medicare and the benefits included in their plans.

4) Spiritual Wellness: One way to encourage spiritual wellness is to create a meditation room for individuals to spend time in peace and silence. Another way to engage people in spiritual wellness is to encourage respect for the self and others. This could be accomplished through an interfaith worship service, which could be conducted once a week for anyone to attend. The interfaith service would include prayer, worship, and fellowship with others (Montague & Frank, 2007).

All four recommendations help to incorporate the missing domains of Montague’s whole-person wellness model into the wellness center. Incorporating these missing domains will help eliminate barriers, promote facilitators and encourage personal wellness for all members of the wellness center.
Appendix A.

Consent to Participate in:

“What Does The wellness center Mean to You?”

This research will help us: 1) to learn the barriers that inhibit access to The wellness center and 2) to learn the facilitators that promote access to The wellness center. The goal of this research is to report to the wellness center the current facilitators and barriers hindering or promoting access to the wellness center.

Working with a researcher you will describe current barriers and facilitators that inhibit or promote your access to the wellness center. This will take place in in-person interviews and will only take 30 to 60 minutes of your time. You will also be asked to bring in a photo of the most important barrier and facilitator that inhibits or promotes access to the wellness center.

Participating in the research does not present any risks. The benefits are that you will help the wellness center understand how they can create a center that is accessible and help to bridge some of the barriers in the way of participating in the wellness center programs.

The information you provide in the interviews will be kept confidential in that your name will not appear on any data sheet. However, someone may see your name on the participation schedule and/or see you here today during the session and know that you participated in the research.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, answer a question, or stop participation, at any time throughout the study. There will be no penalty for leaving the study at any time.

Please contact the interviewer [name omitted for publication] if you have questions in regards to this study. Please contact the Office for the Advancement of Research and Scholarship (513-529-3600; humansubjects@muohio.edu) for questions of concerns about your rights as subjects.

I have read the above information and been given an explanation by the researcher. I fully understand the requirements for participation in this study. I consent to participate in this study.

___________________  ___________________  ___________
Printed Name  Signed Name  Date
Appendix B.

Participant Demographics & Background Information

1. What is your current city of residence?

2. What is your date of birth?

3. How many days a week do you attend Elements?

4. What programs and events do you attend? Please select all that apply:
   ___ 1. Land Exercise Classes
   ___ 2. Water Exercise Classes
   ___ 3. Organized Activities (chair volleyball, Wii Bowling, etc.)
   ___ 4. Trips and Outings
   ___ 5. Personal Training Sessions
   ___ 6. Independent Exercise
   ___ 7. Other (please explain below)

Interview Questions & Probes

1. Is it difficult to attend Elements each week? Why or why not?

2. Is there anything you would change about Elements, what would it be?

3. What are some personal barriers that keep you from coming to Elements?

4. Does anything stop you from coming to Elements?

5. What encourages you to get up and come to Elements?

6. Why do you enjoy coming to Elements?

7. What is the best program or service offered at Elements? Why do you think so?

9. Do you like to socialize when coming to Elements? Why or why not?
   - So you typically go alone or with a group?

10. Do you feel better about your health because of Elements?
References:


Retrieved by: [www.nationalwellness.org](http://www.nationalwellness.org)


