

# Identifying and exploring the social and emotional needs of athlete families at New England Disabled Sports



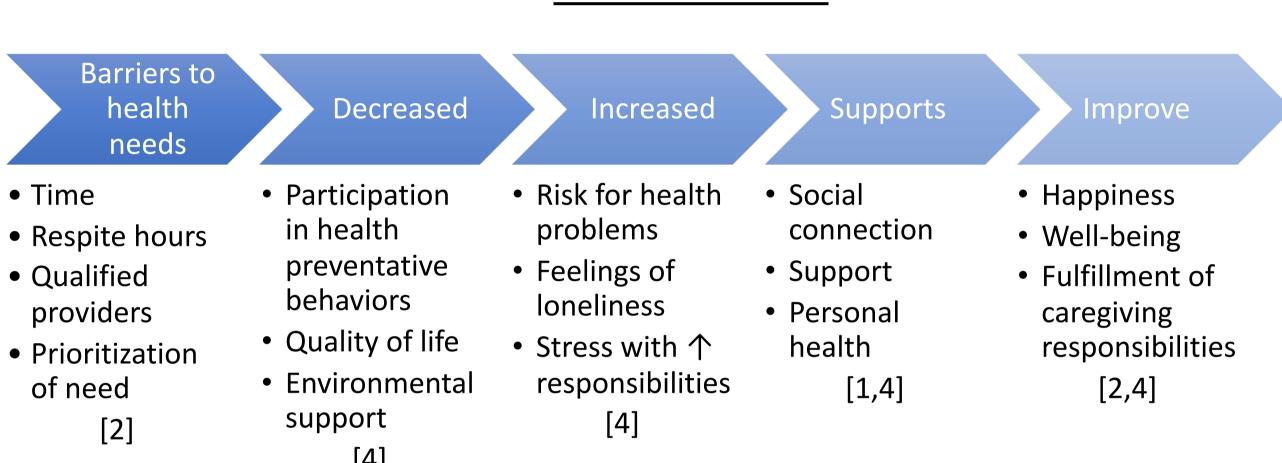
Hannah Pacun, OT/s & Sarah Everhart Skeels, MPH

## **Background & Significance**

#### New England Disabled Sports (NEDS):

- Non-profit organization offering year-round adaptive sport programming for individuals with lifelong disabilities [3]
  - Winter programming: Alpine skiing, snowboarding, and snowshoeing
  - Program Locations: Loon Mountain & Bretton Woods (BW)
  - OT student intern opportunities: DEC, Fieldwork level I & II
- Purpose:
  - ↑ organizational awareness of social and emotional needs of families
  - Provide meaningful experience for NEDS clients and families

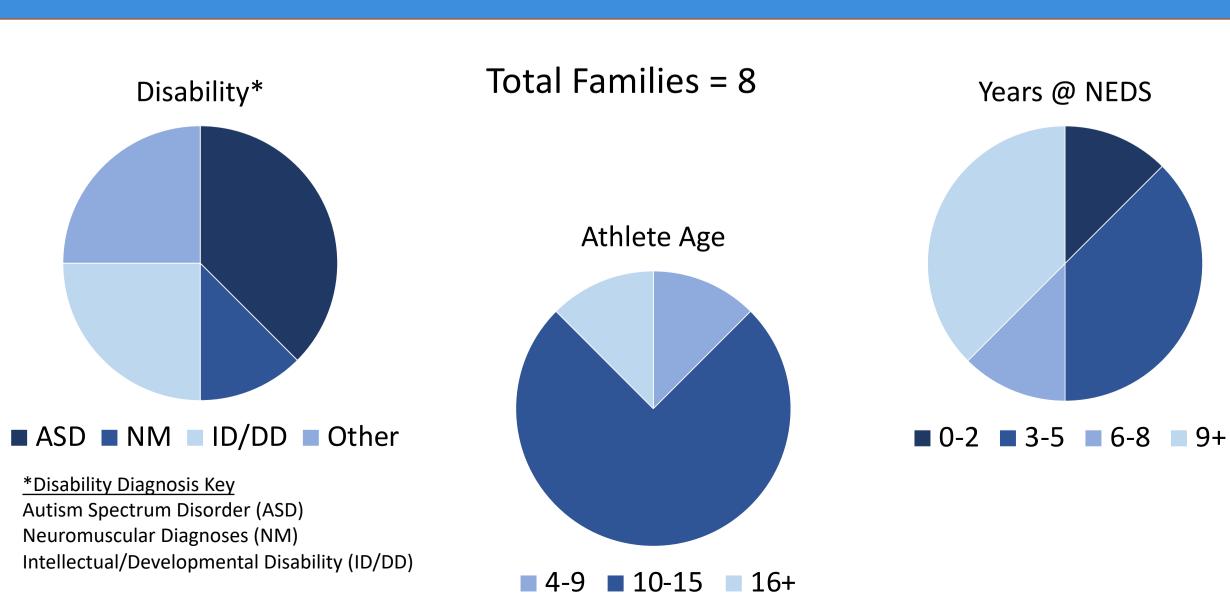
#### Literature Review



### Aims

- .. Conduct needs assessment to understand how current NEDS programming meets the social and emotional needs of parents, caregivers, and guardians of student athletes
- 2. Speak with a variety of NEDS community members to learn more about how NEDS programming supports parents, caregivers, and guardians of student athletes
- 3. Develop program recommendations for NEDS in relation to addressing any identified gaps within NEDS programming, including social and emotional needs

# **Athlete Family Profile**



#### Methods



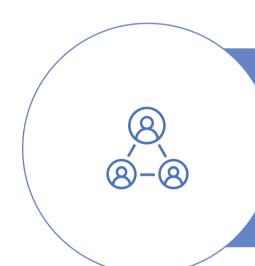


- Phase II: Interviews with Families while at NEDS
- Semi-structured Interviews w/ athlete families (n=8)
- Criteria: Disability & time at NEDS
- Topics: stress, stress mgmt, self-care/coping, social support, NEDS



#### **Phase III: Thematic Analysis**

- Analyze interview & program survey data (n ~ 110)
- Program recommendations

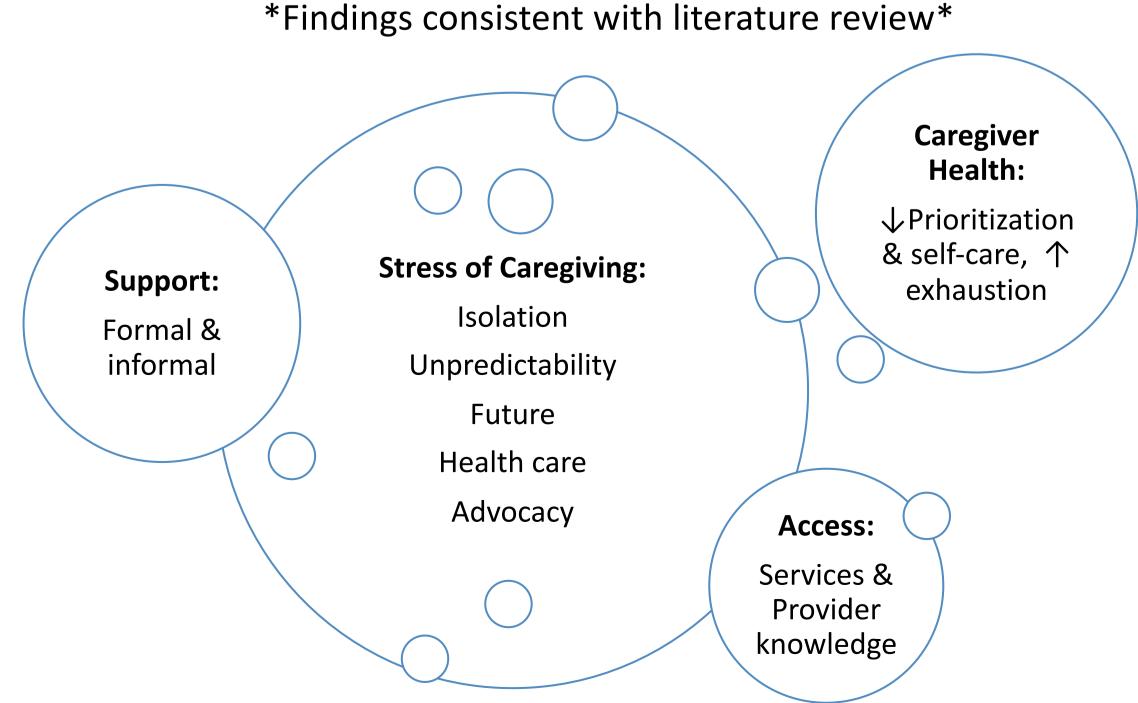


#### **Phase IV: Meet with Stakeholders**

- Discuss findings & recommendations w/staff
- Report to NEDS Executive Board & DEC students
- Develop organizational report

# **Findings**

# **Caregiving Experience Themes**



# Recommendations/Next Steps



#### Refine Intake Process

- Refine intake process to create more comprehensive athlete profile
- Develop resource w/ guiding questions re client factors: strengths, interests, supports, abilities, etc.
- OT interns to support creation of profiles

# Resources

- Lesson (picture
  - exchange PECs & visuals)

# **Develop & Share**

- NEDS experience (videos & social stories re: expectations)
- communication system-
- FAQ's (clothing, equipment set-up, fitting process, hospitality, etc.)

### **Enhance Family** Experience

- Develop pilot program to promote social connection
- Identify platform to exchange resources & network b/w families
- Develop volunteer position to support family programming

# Strengths/Limitations

	Strengths		Limitations
Student	Organizational	Process	<b>Athlete Family</b>
<ul> <li>- Integrated into NEDS community</li> <li>- Communicated with families across various contexts (admin vs. lessons)</li> <li>- Utilized family-centered approach, &amp; therapeutic use of self</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Stakeholder- engagement throughout process (families, staff &amp; board)</li> <li>Athlete profile representative of participant demographics (primary disability, age, years @ NEDS)</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Reached saturation w/8 families</li> <li>Findings informed by &amp; consistent with literature review</li> <li>Sustainability with Summer &amp; Spring DEC students</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Small athlete family sample size (n = 8)</li> <li>Family demographics: diversity, # new families, &amp; location (Loon &amp; BW)</li> </ul>

#### References

- (1) Blake, L., Bray, L., & Carter, B. (2019). "It's a lifeline": Generating a sense of social connectedness through befriending parents of disabled children or children with additional need. Patient Education and Counseling, 102(12), 2279–2285. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pec.2019.07.012
- (2) Murphy, N. A., Christian, B., Caplin, D. A., & Young, P. C. (2006). The health of caregivers for children with disabilities: Caregiver perspectives. Child: care, health and development, 33 (2), 180-187. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2214.2006.00644.x
- (3) New England Disabled Sports. (n.d.). About NEDS. https://nedisabledsports.org/
- (4) Resch, J. A., Mireles, G., Benz, M. R., Grenwelge, C., Peterson, R., & Zhang, D. (2010). Giving parents a voice: A qualitative study of the challenges experienced by parents of children with disabilities. Rehabilitation Psychology, 55(2), 139–150. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0019473

# Contacts/Acknowledgements

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<sup>\*</sup>Provided organizational support and coached ski lessons throughout\* \*\*This study was IRB determined as human subject non-research\*\*