

SPECIAL TOPICS IN PUBLIC HEALTH
ORIGINAL RESEARCH: FEATURED ABSTRACT FROM THE
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Identifying Walking and Trail Use Supports and Barriers Through Focus-Group Research

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Walking and trail use supports and barriers in a South Carolina county were identified. As part of a community-based participatory research project, focus groups were conducted to develop social marketing activities.

Twelve focus groups were conducted to identify themes related to physical activity, walking, and trail use. Questions covered preferred walking location, social support for physical activity, preferred incentives, and characteristics of trails. Discussions were recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed using NVivo software.

Results from the focus groups revealed that, while concern for safety was the primary walking barrier cited by women and older adults, walking groups were a potential support for them. There were differences in preferences between active and inactive groups and male and female participants. The secluded nature of some trails had positive and negative aspects. Furthermore, awareness of existing trails was low.

This focus-group research indicated that the social marketing intervention in this community should address safety concerns and emphasize walking groups for women

and older adults. The lack of awareness of available walking trails indicated a need to publicize trails as part of the intervention.

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