

## What's So Fun About Physical Therapy?

Opening Session, Spring  
Convention 2003

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## Why address fun in PT?

- Outstanding PT Award 2002
- Contemplation
- "Personal Mission"
- Relate that to PT

## Why address fun in PT?

- PT as means for fun
- Random episodes of fun
- Inservices to nursing staff
- Convention 2002
  - Award, EBP--Literature reviews
- Journals
- Medicare Documentation seminar
- Realization

# PHYSICAL THERAPY CAN BE FUN!

## Purpose of this address

- "My idea of fun" -- NOT!
- Concepts of fun
- Motivation
- Flow theory

## What is fun?

**fun** (fun), *n., v., funned, funning, adj.* – *n.*  
**1.** that which provides mirth or amusement; enjoyment; playfulness: *A picnic would be fun She's full of fun.* **2. for or in fun**, as a joke; not seriously; playfully: *His insults were only in fun.*

--**Syn.** **1.** merriment, pleasure, play, gaiety, frolic, revel.

--**Ant.** **1.** misery, melancholy.

Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language. 1989

### What is fun?

- PLEASURE, ENJOYMENT, DELIGHT, JOY refer to the feeling of being pleased and happy. PLEASURE is the general term: *to take pleasure in beautiful scenery*. ENJOYMENT is a quiet sense of well-being and pleasurable satisfaction: *enjoyment at sitting in the shade on a warm day*. DELIGHT is a high degree of pleasure, usually leading to active expression of it: *delight at receiving a hoped-for letter*. JOY is a feeling of delight so deep and so lasting that one radiates happiness and expresses it spontaneously: *joy at unexpected good news*.

### What is fun?

- Individual perceptions
- Related concepts
  - Positive emotional state
  - Control
  - Competition
  - Exciting
  - Novelty
  - Physical vs. Mental
  - Humor

### What is fun?

- Related concepts
  - Wanting to improve
  - Significance to create a memory
  - Bliss
  - Connectedness
  - Joy
  - Play

### Joy

- Chinese Medicine
- Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, Water
- “The Chinese in their wisdom concerning balance realized that the emotion of joy in excess is as harmful as an excess of anger; the lack of joy is just as harmful.”  
-Dianne M. Connelly, PhD., M.Ac.

### Joy

- “Joy is our natural state. It is our birthright.”  
-Eliot Cowan
- Three levels of joy:
  - Body, mind, spirit
- True joy vs. substitutes
  - Example: excess of alcohol

### Joy

“The desire for permanent joy is an impossible thirst and, if sought after inordinately through work or play, can put too much stress on the Fire Element, causing something to *give*. Often the symptom of high blood pressure is the bodymind's way of saying, *Take it easy or I'll succumb to this pressure.*”  
-Dianne M. Connelly, PhD., M.Ac.

## Play

- “Play is the first and most basic notion of having fun.”
- “Play is whatever absorbs us fully, whatever creates purpose and order, whatever involves us in as much meaningful interaction as is possible.”  
-George Leonard

## Play

“We retain the playfulness of childhood all through our lives. And playfulness is the quality that is essential for high levels of curiosity and inquisitiveness... We call adult play by many names, such as science, art, sport, dance, architecture, costume, literature, and music.”  
-Desmond Morris

## Biology

- Appreciation of humor
  - Frontal lobe
  - Supplementary motor area
- Pleasure center -- Nucleus accumbens
- Neurotransmitters
  - Serotonin -- Depression
  - Norepinepherin -- Fight or flight
  - Dopamine -- Pleasure

## Motivation

- Extrinsic
  - Looking to the outside
  - The boss or the rules
  - Potential benefits
- Intrinsic
  - Meaning or pleasure is in the activity itself
  - Can't be imposed from the outside
  - Greater levels when there is control of the environment

## Motivation

“Human motivation is driven by a genetically inherited urge to make things happen -- to stimulate variety and create novelty.”  
-Desmond Morris

## Flow theory

- Article by James L. Mandigo and Linda P. Thompson
- Work of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

## Flow

- “When people enjoy whatever they are doing, they report some characteristic experiential states that distinguish the enjoyable moment from the rest of life. When all the characteristics are present, we call this state of consciousness a flow experience, because ...[it feels] like being carried away by a current, like being in a flow.”

-Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

## Flow

- Flow occurs when a situation or activity provides for above average and balanced challenge and skill.

## FLOW

	ABOVE AVERAGE CHALLENGE	BELOW AVERAGE CHALLENGE
ABOVE AVERAGE SKILL	<b>FLOW</b>	<b>BOREDOM</b>
BELOW AVERAGE SKILL	<b>ANXIETY</b>	<b>APATHY</b>

## Characteristics of Flow

- Control of one's life at that time
- Merging of action and awareness
- Very focused on the task
- Loss of self-consciousness
- Transformation of time
- Optimally challenged

## Characteristics of Flow

- Clear goals and informative feedback
- Enjoyment
- Being at the “cutting edge”
- Positive emotional state
- Perceived success

## Conditions for Flow

- Setting clear achievable goals
- Evaluating these goals
- Being able to focus on the task
- Creating easily modified challenges
- Allowing for choice
- Encouraging commitment
- Providing opportunities for skill development

## Predicting Flow

- "...the frequency of flow was predicted by perceived ability and task orientation. In addition, those who reported high levels of mastery and perceived ability reported significantly higher levels of flow..."

-Mandigo and Thompson quoting a study by Jackson and Roberts

## Flow

- "The components of a flow state are so enjoyable that the participant will want to continue with the activity or participate in it again for the sake of participation."

-Mandigo and Thompson quoting Csikszentmihalyi

## Key Concepts

- Challenge
- Skill (and development of skill)
- Goals and feedback
- Control
- Connection

## Fun and Play

- "To do its inner work, [the practice of physical therapy] demands for the [PT or PTA] the rigorous application of skill, intelligence, and creativity within the inherent designs of the [profession]."

-Andrew Cooper

## Fun and Play

"Creative playfulness is the supremely human condition and, without it, we are less than human."

-Desmond Morris

# HAVE FUN!

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