

BACKGROUND

Rates of habitual or lifelong physical activity (PA) in the U.S. are low with essentially no increase in levels of PA among older adults in the past decade.

PURPOSE

We aimed to describe the experiences of older women regarding uptake and maintenance of the Lifestyle PA for older women (LPAW) intervention, salience of intervention components, acceptability of procedures, and the barriers and facilitators of PA to support effective implementation of future PA programs.

SAMPLE

- Participants were subsampled from the LPAW clinical trial
- Purposively selected using maximum variation sampling from four groups:
 - Control group drop outs
 - Experimental group drop outs
 - Control group completers
 - Intervention group completers
- Participants:
 - Mean age 68 (range: 60-94);
 - 8 African American women
 - 11 White, 1 Native American
 - 11 were part of the intervention group; 9 were in the control group
- Sample would be considered at high risk for cardiovascular disease per health indices



METHODS

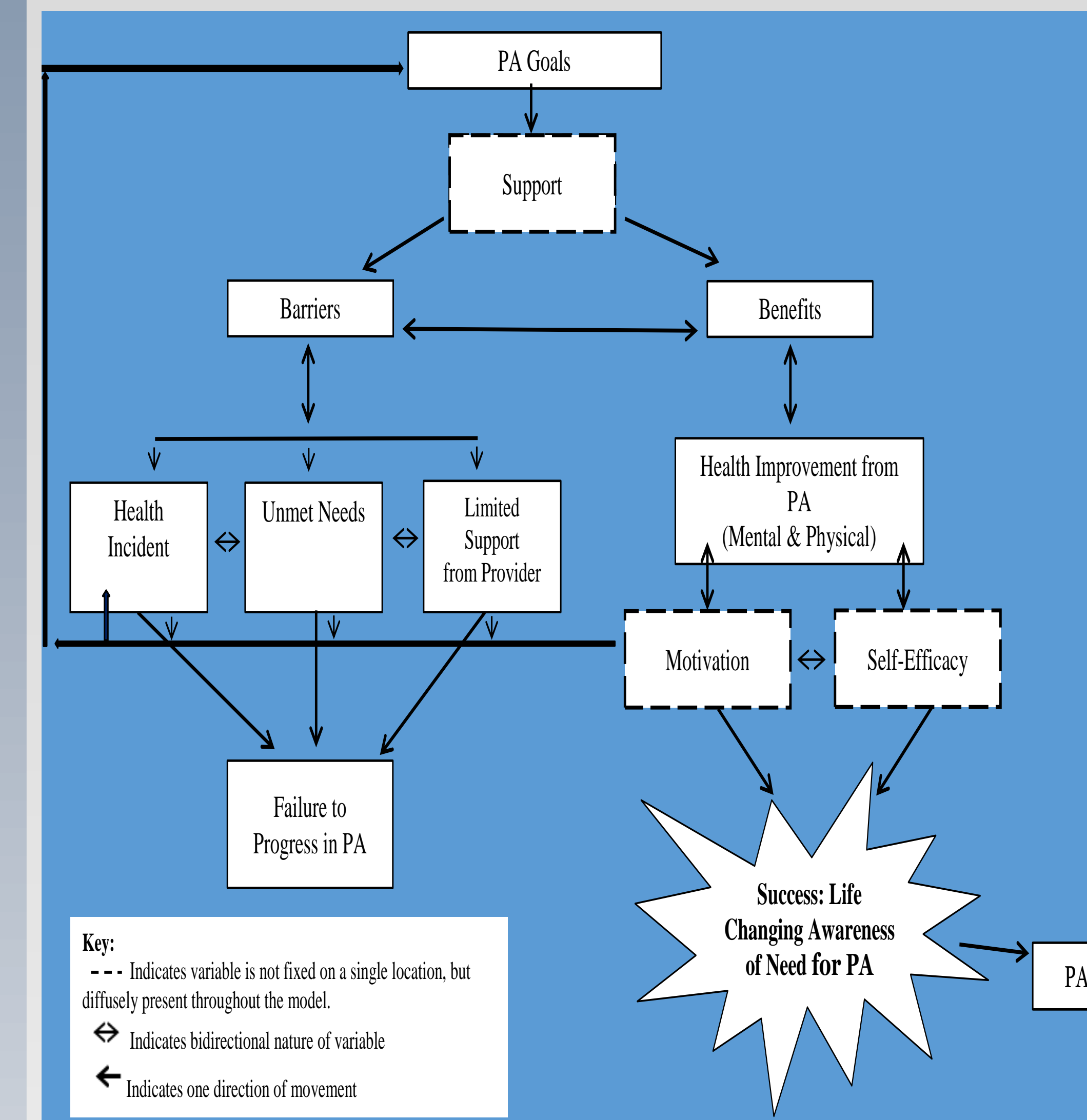
- Process evaluation study using a descriptive phenomenological, qualitative design
- Semi-structured interview guide
- Conducted in-depth, face-to-face individual interviews to explore experiences of the women who had participated in LPAW trial
- Graduate student RA, trained in interview techniques & not associated with the LPAW clinical trial, conducted, transcribed, and assisted with analysis
- Ethnograph, a text-based management program used to code, sort, organize data
- Systematic, objective, content analysis followed by constant comparison used to identify key themes and categories.



FINDINGS

Central Themes	Categories of Each Theme	Participant Narratives
Barriers	Health Incident	"I was excited about starting...it didn't last long...it was mainly my not being able to breathe." (control group, dropped out*)
	Needed More Help	"...hey I'm right on your side...you need to get up. That would compel them to do better. That's what a lot of people need... I mean they got the willpower and the mindset thing but when it comes to doing it, you need a little shove..." (intervention group)
	Limited Support	[Did your Provider ever say anything to you about exercise?] "No...I guess it would help me if they would encourage me to do that." (intervention group)
Benefits in Health	Mental	"And I find where my mind was being activated. I don't know if that's what the study supposed to be...I was able to remember things...it kept my mind alert." (control group)
	Physical	"All this exercise actually helps...It helps with depression. Like I said, I feel better. My blood pressure is lower. I just love it. Great health benefits." (intervention group)
Becoming Motivated	PA Diary	"I felt it [PA diary] was very good because I knew I was going to be filling that out. So it made me aware...It was a boost to keep going...encouragement." (intervention group)
	Account-ability	"I think probably the most beneficial part was the accountability factor...having somebody to come back and report to. It gave me that inspiration." (intervention group)
	Tailored	"We were able to discuss things and lay out a plan that was best suited for me...It was like having an athletic trainer." (intervention group)
Self-Efficacy		"So it gave me a better outlook on things as far as doing things for myself...You think about what you can do...It gave me a better way of thinking about myself and about life." (control group)
Life Changing Awareness		"I view exercise differently than I had in the past...it really does impact, you know, the way you view exercise and nutrition long after the study is over." (intervention group)
		"You just have to incorporate it in the way you live [PA], that's just part of your days...It made me more aware of the need to be consistent about it." (intervention group)

PA EXPLANATORY MODEL



SO WHAT?

What does this article add?

- Adds to the science of PA by suggesting central mechanisms for success or failure of PA interventions

What are the implications for health-promotion practice/research?

- Findings suggest that PA programs for older women should include interventions supporting motivation and self-efficacy, reduce barriers to PA, and focus on benefits to health in order to grow a life-changing awareness of the need for PA.
- Changing mindsets and values about PA, an action to cultivate a Culture of Health, may help propagate daily PA to improve lifelong health.