Managing Sport and Physical Activity Spaces to Create Body Weight Inclusivity:
Dimensionality and Health Related Outcomes

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Despite a numerical majority of the United States’ population being classified as “overweight” or “obese,” physical activity spaces remain hostile environments for those in larger bodies. Thus, the current research explores the dimensions of body inclusive spaces that are likely to (re)engage individuals into healthful participation and the effects of body inclusion on participants’ identification with the activity, as well as physical and psychological health. First, the authors developed a six-dimension scale of body inclusion, which was examined and refined by a panel of experts. The dimensions tested include: authentic leadership, a culture of inclusion, inclusive language, a health specific focus, social justice activism of leaders, and a sense of community. The scale was then validated using a large (n = 626) sample of activity participants, noting that each of the proposed dimensions was positively related to body inclusivity. Further analyses, using structural equation modeling (SEM) showed that inclusivity was positively related to individuals’ personal identification with the activity, physical health, and psychological health. Further, the relationship between inclusivity and psychological health was partially mediated by activity identification. The current research demonstrates the importance of inclusive spaces in engaging individuals often left out of sport and physical activity opportunities. Limitations, directions of future research, implications for practice are discussed.