

Understanding Cerebral Palsy

Summary

The main aim of this article was to give readers some understanding of Cerebral Palsy and how it can affect individuals. It also highlighted the individual behind the condition of Cerebral Palsy and the importance of acknowledging their individuality.

Cerebral Palsy can be a complex condition, affecting individuals in different ways depending upon type and severity. It can cause individuals to have different levels of function and different needs. The effect of the condition can have implications for movement and other functions such as speech and learning, consequently affecting individuals' everyday lives. Modifications and different types of therapies and medical interventions are therefore important. In the context of sport, recreation, fitness and exercise, this is very important to note as making modifications can reduce barriers (such as stairs into a sport centre) or unnecessary hurdles (such as competition rules that do not consider that some athletes with Cerebral Palsy have involuntary movements or spasms), that can prevent, limit or put individuals with Cerebral Palsy at an unfair disadvantage. Equally, understanding Cerebral Palsy, how it can affect individuals as well as understanding what individuals' can and cannot do, helps to create activities and experiences that allows for maximal engagement and, subsequently, allows the individual to experience, enjoy or perform (in the case of sports performance) the activity effectively.

Along with understanding the condition of Cerebral Palsy and how it might affect people, it is important to acknowledge and see those with Cerebral Palsy as individuals with desires, wants and needs. Despite some individuals having medical conditions which affects their function, individuals are still individuals with emotions, wants, needs and desires, who are still able to experience everyday life. As a result, this means that they still have the human need to be fulfilled where they can also experience distress. Consequently, individuals with Cerebral Palsy still have the ability to feel, meaning that just objectifying who they are and what they want, overlooks them as people and individuality.