Unit 4 Section 1: Personal Leisure Perspectives: Motivations and Age Group Factors

UNIT OBJECTIVES AND OVERVIEW

This unit covers the following objectives:

1. Define motivation.
   
   What is your personal definition of motivation? How does your definition differ from your peers’, if at all?

2. Identify a variety of motivations for participation in recreation beyond fun or relaxation.

3. List and discuss various (a) physical, (b) social, (c) psychological, and (d) emotional, intellectual, and spiritual motivators.
   
   Why do you participate in your favorite leisure pursuits? What benefits do you derive from participating in the leisure and recreation activities that you choose? Why do people engage in recreation and leisure activities? As you consider the readings, and your own activities as well as those of your peers, are there some reasons that you hadn’t thought of before?

4. Discuss the overall influence of age groups on recreation.

5. Examine recreation in the lives of children, adolescents, adults, and older adults.

The unit is divided into two sections (sections 1 and 2). Each section contains online lectures and assignments to go with each lecture.

Overview

Now that we have reviewed the history of leisure throughout the world, we will now examine leisure from personal and societal perspectives. Unit 4 Section 1 explores the varied motivations that impel individuals in different age groups to participate in recreation and leisure. We will explore the values and benefits of leisure, as well as the constraints that limit participation. It is also important to note the influence of demographic factors such as race or ethnicity, gender, age, socioeconomic class, and other elements on recreational involvement.

Why do people choose to watch television for hours at a time, play competitive sports, or climb Mount Everest? The reasons are as varied as people are. Unit 4 Section 1 provides an overview of the definitions of motivation in general as well as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Since motivation is a diverse topic, it has been divided into four types of leisure motivators: (a) physical, (b) social, (c) psychological, and (d) emotional, intellectual, and spiritual motivators.

Our leisure preferences and motivations change as we age. The impact of leisure on children, adolescents, adults, and older adults is outlined. Furthermore, the changing patterns of adult and family life continue to have direct impact on the provision of recreation and leisure services.
These changes are discussed, as well as the ways various leisure-service groups are attempting to meet the resulting demands.

**NOTE:** I would suggest that each of you take a look at the assignments before you read the text and your online lecture so you can be thinking about how you will complete the assignments as you are doing the reading.
Part 1: What is Motivation?

Recreation participants derive different qualities from participating in different leisure activities, and these qualities are what drive them to participate. These driving factors are called motivators. Motivation is defined as an internal or external element that moves people toward a behavior. For example, a recreation-related motivator could be a desire to develop tennis skills or to learn about the visual arts.

There are two types of motivators, including extrinsic motivators and intrinsic motivators. Extrinsic motivators are those things that cause a behavior but are controlled by an external force. Extrinsic motivators are sometimes viewed as rewards. For example, a professional skater receives compensation for playing for his or her team. This compensation is an external reward, and most probably is one of the driving motivations for the skater’s participation. Intrinsic motivators are elements that drive a person to behave in a certain way simply for the behavior itself and how it makes them feel inside. Rock climbing for the first time could lead to a sense of accomplishment and pride in the fact that the goal was reached. These feelings are intrinsic motivators. The act of rock climbing was done because of the benefits of the activity and not because of an external reward. The activity was done for its own sake, producing rewards that are internal to the individual.

Beyond the familiar motivations of seeking fun, pleasure, or relaxation, people engage in leisure pursuits for a host of different reasons. Recreational motivations may include personal goals such as the need for companionship, escape from stress or the boredom of daily routine, and the search for challenge, a sense of personal accomplishment, physical fitness, or emotional release. Leisure motivations are shaped by both participants and activities at different levels of skill, experience, or difficulty. These motivations vary considerably depending on factors such as activity type, age, gender, race or ethnicity, socioeconomic status, etc.
Part 2: Motivation for Recreation Participation

Even though there are many ways to address motivation, it is important to look at broad motivating factors that relate to leisure preferences. Most, if not all, motivators of leisure participation can fit into one or more of the following four categories.

Physical Motivators

The value of active recreational pursuits such as sports and games, dance, and even walking or gardening have significant positive effects on physical development and health. The values of such activities will vary according to the age and developmental needs of the participants. For example, for children and youth the major need is to promote healthy growth, fitness, endurance, and the acquisition of physical qualities and skills. Other physical motivators include the following:

- control of obesity
- preserving cardiovascular health
- wellness concept of health

Social Motivators

The need to be part of a social group and to have friends who provide companionship, support, and intimacy is at the core of many recreational pursuits. Consider why you as students join fraternities, sororities, or other social clubs. Why do older adults become involved in senior citizen centers and tour groups? There are several social motivators, including being with others, overcoming loneliness, and developing social norms among children. In fact, only 2 percent of all leisure activities are done alone. This statistic speaks to the fact that people like to participate in leisure activities with others. Other social motivators include the following:

- social contact
- friendship development
- develop interpersonal relationships
- learn how to interact appropriately with others (e.g. accepting rules, learning to give and take, etc.)

Psychological Motivators

Recreational activities are often viewed as a means of providing excitement and challenge, as a means of relaxation and escape, or as a means of reducing or eliminating stress. Other psychological motivators include the following:

- excitement and challenge
- relaxation and escape
- stress management
- healthy balance of work and play
- hedonistic motivators
When looking at hedonistic motivators, consider leisure pursuits that are based on the desire for pleasure of a sensual nature, such as gambling, drug or alcohol use, or direct or indirect sexual involvement. While many of these activities have been condemned or prohibited in some societies, and while laws still exist in more North American communities to control gambling, drinking, drug use, or commercialized sex, public participation and spending on these activities continue to be high.

**Emotional, Intellectual, and Spiritual Motivators**

Even the most “normal” person experiences tension, boredom, stress, frustration, and an inability to use their leisure in satisfying ways. Consider, for example, the estimated 35 million people in the U.S. who have been diagnosed with mental depression. Leisure activity can provide strong feelings of pleasure and satisfaction and can serve as an outlet for releasing stress. Intellectual outcomes of leisure and recreation include the following:

- Strong relationship found between physical fitness and academic performance.
- Playfulness has a personal quality has been found to be closely linked to creative and inventive thinking among children.
- Stimulates learning (assimilation or the process of taking in information and accommodation or the process of adjusting to external circumstances and stimuli).

In terms of spiritual values and outcomes of leisure participation, spiritual means a capacity for exhibiting humanity’s higher nature—possessing a sense of moral values, compassion, and respect for others. Leisure can be a time for contemplation and for consideration of ultimate values. Spiritual outcomes of leisure and recreation include the following:

- developing of one’s inner feelings
- developing a sense of order and purpose in life
- commitment to care for others and behave responsibly
Part 3: Influence of Age Groups on Recreation

Age and family status represent key factors that affect the recreational needs and interests of individuals throughout life. Human development experts have outlined a sequence of age groupings extending from infancy through old age, and recreational professionals have developed guidelines for planning programs for each group based on developmental characteristics at each stage.

When we think about the concept of the life course, we think of both continuity and change. For example, we experience changes as we transition from grade school levels (e.g., to middle, high school, and then to college). Then we transition from college to work, from job to job, and then to retirement. In families there is also change and transition related to marriage, having children, raising children, and then perhaps widowhood.

Consider for a moment how one’s leisure might change based on age. In leisure, there is a loss of recreational pursuits due to leaving school, moving to new areas, and a decline in active leisure involvement as we get older. However, in terms of continuity, there is consistency in sexual identification, relating with other people, our values, self-images, and feelings of competence. These attributes typically stay the same as we move through the life span.

We have also seen dramatic shifts in life experiences. Today, children are exposed to the realities of life and mature physically at a much earlier point than in the past. However, they have a longer period of adolescence and education before entering the adult workforce. In addition, adults now tend to marry later and have few children, and many adults are choosing not to marry at all. Older adults have longer periods of retirement, and a significantly greater number of older adults live active and adventurous leisure lifestyles today than in the past. In order to fully understand the impact of societal trends on recreational involvement, we will examine each major age group.
Part 4: Recreation in the Lives of Children

Childhood is the age group that includes children from infancy through the preteen years. There are more than 35.5 million children between 5 and 13 years of age, and there will be 20 million children under age 5 by the year 2010. Play and recreation satisfies important developmental needs in children, often helping to establish values and behavior patterns that will continue throughout their lives. For example, leisure activity for children has been found to contribute to cognitive development, including problem solving and creative thinking. Play also provides children the opportunity to learn about their abilities and limitations. Children imitate, experiment, construct, represent, and dramatize through play and leisure activities. Play then becomes a basis for developing reasoning, communication, and socialization skills.

Psychologists have examined the role of play at each stage of life, beginning with infancy and moving through the preschool period, middle and late childhood, and adolescence:

1. Solitary play, carried on without others nearby.
2. Parallel play, in which children play side by side without meaningful interplay.
3. Associative play, in which children share a common game but concentrate on their own individual efforts rather than group activity.
4. Cooperative play, beginning at about 3 years of age, where children actually join together in games.

By the age of six or seven, children tend to be involved in loosely organized play groups, leading to much more tightly constructive and organized groups in the 8–12 year old range.

Over the past three decades, a number of major changes have occurred that have radically changed the lives of children in terms of their family and neighborhood environments and community services provided to meet their needs. Some of those societal changes include the following:

Decline of the Family Structure. Consider the growing divorce and separation rates and the increasing employment of single parents or both parents. As a consequence, the number of “latchkey” children—who are twice as likely to abuse alcohol, tobacco, or marijuana as those who are supervised by parents—represents an increasing social problem.

Overscheduled Children. There are increased demands on children to do household chores, school assignments, classes, clubs, sports clinics, camps, etc., which results in reduced free time.

Economically Disadvantaged Children. Consider the fact that children from economically disadvantaged households tend to have fewer resources for constructive play. They have fewer toys, games, books, trips, classes, day campus, and well-equipped and staffed playgrounds.

Lack of Settings for Play. There is a lack of adequate, safe public settings for play, and many of the playgrounds are poorly supervised or have dangerous equipment and surfacing.
Influence of Commercial Media: Violence and Sex. Consider the overwhelming barrage of violence and sex-laden stimuli that children can now see in the movies, television shows, video games (Mortal Kombat), and music.

Physical Fitness of Youth. American children today are far less physical than those of the post-World War II baby boom years. In fact, 15.3% of children aged 6 to 11 and 15.5% of teens aged 12 to 19 are obese. Why do you think this is true? Perhaps this is due to increases in:

- time spent watching television and playing computer games
- the number of working mothers
- the number of single-parent households
- parental pressure (meaning kids are growing up too fast)

Parents often ask children to learn too much at too young of an age, so normal play is displaced as they become competitive.

WEBLINK: Check out the following website published by the American Heart Association (AHA) regarding overweight children in America.

http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/HealthierKids/OurPrograms/Understanding-Childhood-Obesity_UCM_428229_Article.jsp#.TulmpnoWdmI
Part 5: Recreation in the Lives of Adolescents

Adolescence is the developmental transition from childhood to adulthood that begins at the onset of puberty, between 10 and 12 years of age, and ends at 19 or 20. The U.S. Census Bureau projects that by 2045 there will be over 51 million Americans aged 10 to 19.

Psychologists have completed extensive research that documents a significant relationship between adolescents’ recreational habits and their emotional and social development. For example, high school students with a high degree of self-esteem tended to participate in team sports, musical groups, outdoor recreation, and social activities. Those with lower self-esteem were much less involved in recreation. Adolescence is a period of major physiological and psychological transitions that strongly influence the recreational preferences of this age group, such as the physiological changes associated with puberty and psychological changes associated with acquiring an identity, become independent, and developing a set of values. Despite these changes, adolescents possess numerous positive characteristics, such as the following:

• energetic and full of life
• idealistic with a genuine concern about the future of the country and the world
• intellectually curious as they question contemporary values, philosophies, ideologies, and institutions
• perceptive
• courageous in that they are willing to stick their necks out for their beliefs
• independent

However, adolescents face many challenges in today’s society, including the following:

• smoking
• alcohol and substance abuse
• AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases
• school violence
• suicide secondary to depression and stress
• pregnancy
• conflict with parents
• loss of loved ones
• eating disorders
• self-image issues
• boredom and the need for excitement in relationships
• identity and role confusion
• negative influence of mass media

Constructive free-time alternatives not only keep adolescents off the street but also help prevent boredom and thrill-seeking play that can end in tragic episodes of violence and self-destructive experiences.
SPECIAL NOTE: Look back at your Time Budget Studies and see how much television you watched during the one week you logged your activities. In your opinion, was it excessive?

Recreation Programs for Adolescents

Recreational opportunities for adolescents are generally presented in two (2) categories:

1. **Youth development programs.** These programs focus on teens’ social, emotional needs. They provide teens the opportunity to have regular contact with caring, responsible adults, to contribute to worthwhile causes, and protection from hazardous and antisocial activities. Many of these programs are offered through youth centers. Many of the development programs address issues such as racism and oppression, AIDS, sexuality, sexual abuse, and substance abuse.

2. **Youth recreation programs.** These are oriented toward physical activities, such as sports, fitness, and outdoor adventures.

Additionally, many adolescents are too old for traditional playground activities and too young to drive, so they may spend their time hanging out in the malls.
Part 6: Recreation in the Lives of Adults

The adult population in modern society is defined as those in their late teens to their early or mid-sixties. This is a very broad age range, so it is important to look at an overall picture of how people progress through these years. Since the age range is so broad, we may logically subdivided it into two brackets: Young Adults and Middle Adults.

Young Adults

Young adults encompass individuals in their late teens to early or mid-thirties. More and more young adults are choosing to marry later and are seeking pleasure and self-fulfillment as single individuals. When this trend began to manifest itself, a number of singles-only institutions sprang up to meet the needs of this “new” population. For example, consider the influx of single apartment complexes, bars, weekends at resort hotels, social groups at local churches, cruises, and a variety of other leisure programs or services (e.g., computer dating, speed dating).

College students (a subgroup of the young adult population) who live on campus typically take part in social and religious clubs, athletic events, fraternity and sorority parties, entertainment, or cultural activities. Students living at home often hold jobs and have relatively little free time because they hold jobs and travel to and from work. So they seek their leisure in their own neighborhoods more so than on the college campus. Many college students away from home for the first time often engage in hedonistic forms of leisure as they are no longer supervised by their parents.

Young adulthood is the beginning of what is considered the establishment period. The establishment period includes those years of finding and consolidating a position in the social systems. It is the period of being focused on productive roles and rewards (we want to be productive in society to reap certain rewards). The establishment period covers the young and middle adult years. Family and work career are central during this period. However, in today’s society, people are not going right from school to marriage to jobs. They are taking on work roles earlier while still being in school. Some people do not feel ready for marriage. Consider the following questions:

- **Do you think marriage is on the decline as a whole?** The answer is “no.” More than 80% of people still get married, but they are just choosing to wait longer.

- **How do you think leisure can change after marriage?** Depending on location of residence, job, and the relationship, often married couples do more things together, take weekend trips, and eat out more. They also typically have lower incomes so leisure resources may be limited or exhausted.

- **What generally happens after marriage?** The babies start coming. The primary resources needed for leisure are time, space, money, skills, equipment, and companions. When you think about it, time, space, and money are restricted when we have children.

- **What happens to our leisure lifestyles after we have kids?** The first noticeable loss is the loss of freedom. Couples also lose privacy, do less together, stay at home more, and
bring children along during their leisure experiences. Ultimately, leisure takes a back seat.

Middle Adults

The middle age group includes individuals ranging from their late thirties to their late fifties. The group is called the “baby boomers”—people born during the population surge after World War II (1946–1964). Baby boomers have been found to have immense diversity in their lifestyles. Some are family-oriented, others are not. Some are sports-minded or wilderness-oriented, whereas others are committed to the arts, hobbies, or literary pursuits.
Part 7: Recreation in the Lives of Older Adults

Older adults are people in their mid-sixties and older. Given the increase in life expectancy, this group is also large and diverse. The United Nations Population Fund reported an unprecedented increase in older adults—from 10% of the population in 2000 to 31% in 2150.

Older adulthood is the period when adults reevaluate themselves and their lives. As some of the requirements of earlier parenthood and careers are reduced, older adults can take a second look at commitments of marriage, friendships, leisure, community, and work. There’s often a sense of “running out of time,” thinking about how many years of work and health do they have left. This is the prime opportunity for evaluation and alteration, a time to experiment with new leisure without little disruptions to family and work habits.

Active Older Adults

Without work to fill their time and often with the loss of partners or friends, older adults find it necessary to develop new interests and often to establish new relationships. Loneliness can be quite devastating to this age group. It is now popular for older adults to be more active, vigorous, economically secure, and happy than had been assumed in the past.

Disengaged Older Adults

There are many older adults who completely withdraw from meaningful contact and involvement with others. One group of sociologists explained that disengagement (based on a theory of disengagement which stipulates that withdrawal from social interaction is a normal process of aging) was necessary and inevitable for older adults. This theory has generally been rejected, and most now believe that older adults do not willingly withdraw but do so because of feelings of exclusion.

Changes for Older Adults

The lives of older adults have changed dramatically over the past 3–4 decades. Not only are they living longer, but their living circumstances are likely to be different from those of past generations in terms of familial roles, social activities, economic factors, and other conditions.

Changes in Family Structure. Increasing numbers of older adults are now living separately from family, often isolated, ill, and unable to care for themselves—and ultimately end up in long-term care facilities. There is also a growing number of grandparents who have the responsibility of caring for their grandchildren.

Positive Changes. Older adults are living longer, happier, and healthier lives than in the past. In addition to living longer, older adults are engaging in active sports, volunteering, going back to school, and developing new friendships and relationships.

Specific Contribution of Recreation and Leisure. Numerous studies have shown that regular physical exercise has health-related valued for older adults, with a range of benefits that include preventing heart disease, stroke, cancer, osteoporosis and diabetes; weight reduction; reducing arthritic symptoms; countering depression; and even improving their memory and quality of
sleep. Social benefits include reduction in isolation and loneliness. Cognitive benefits include improved memory and learning new skills (e.g., computer skills).
Unit 4 Section 2: Sociocultural Factors Affecting Leisure

UNIT OBJECTIVES AND OVERVIEW

This unit covers the following objectives:

1. Identify the predominant gender factors influencing leisure involvement.
2. Examine women in leisure and men in leisure.
3. Define leisure constraints.
4. Discuss factors faced by the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) populations and their impact on leisure.
5. Explore how recreation agencies can address the needs of the LGBT population.
6. Define race and ethnicity.
7. Examine race and ethnicity issues pertaining to leisure.
8. Explore ways to incorporate different racial and ethnic groups into recreation programs.

Overview

This unit examines sociocultural factors that affect personal leisure values and involvements today: gender, sexual orientation, and racial and ethnic identity. Though as a society we have unquestionably achieved a higher level of sophistication in our understanding and acceptance of minority groups, there are still a variety of constraints—both overt and covert, deliberate and accidental—that must be dealt with before we have a society that is truly equal and equitable.

The unit discusses the impact of the feminist movement on recreation, leisure, and sport, as well as the resulting implications for men. The role of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgendered (LGBT) in leisure and recreation is also discussed, noting that although there is growing acceptance of this group, there remain many barriers to full acceptance.

Race and ethnicity are also defined and discussed as factors influencing leisure involvement. Prospects for the future are discussed by identifying key areas of need and suggestions on how the recreation and leisure movement can aid in further progress.

NOTE: I would suggest that each of you take a look at the assignments before you read the text and your online lecture so you can be thinking about how you will complete the assignments as you are doing the reading.
Part 1: Gender Factors Influencing Leisure

Beyond the issue of one age’s group (as was explored in the previous unit), another factor that plays an important role in leisure has to do with sexual or gender identity and values. One distinction that needs to be made is between the terms sex and gender. These terms are often used interchangeably, but social scientists use the term sex to identify biological or physical classification in terms of the structure and functions that are possessed by one sex or the other. On the other hand, gender describes a broad range of characteristics, roles, or behaviors that society usually attaches to men and women. Consider differences between males and females, such as family or marital roles, educational status, political influences, etc. When we think about leisure pursuits of children, there are gender-related stereotypes. For example, little boys are encouraged to play with “boy” toys such as guns and trucks, and little girls are given dolls and tea sets. Even though these gender-related stereotypes have been challenged, many still exist today.

Women and Leisure

As mentioned earlier, during the early part of the 20th century roles and activities assigned to girls and women, as well as the expectations regarding their ability to work well in groups, reflected past perceptions of women as weak and inferior. This, of course, led to limited leisure and recreation programming for girls and women.

Impact of the Feminist Movement. A major influential factor in the changes toward equality for women was the feminist movement. The feminist movement emphasized the need for women to obtain more legal and political rights. In addition to this equality, feminists also advocated for freedom of choice in recreation and leisure. This movement led to the creation of women’s organizations and support groups and was responsible for legislation and court decisions that broke down the walls of gender discrimination in the 1970s and 1980s. Women are now more engaged in individual and team sports from secondary school and college competitive programs to professional sports.

WEBLINK: Below is a weblink to the Women’s Sports Foundation which is an organization that was founded in 1974 by Billie Jean King. The Women’s Sports Foundation is a charitable educational organization dedicated to advancing the lives of girls and women through sports and physical activity.

http://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/

Another example that depicts the advancement of women in recreation and leisure services is an online career center for women interested in the sports industry. WomenSportsJobs.com is a leading online career center for women in the sports industry, and for women interested in sports-related fields. The site provides an online platform for connecting sports enterprises with the most qualified career-minded individuals. Members have the ability to search hundreds of jobs in the sports industry, while employers can search a pool of qualified and diversified candidates. Jobs are posted daily to provide you with the most current and up-to-date opportunities in the industry.

WEBLINK: You can explore this website at the following weblink:
Continuing Patterns of Exclusion. Despite the positive strides made to date to reduce gender-based exclusion in leisure and recreation, continuing patterns of exclusion still exist. Consider, for example, the existence of exclusive private clubs for men only. Additionally, the number of women serving as head coaches of women’s athletic teams is the lowest ever.

Constraints on Women’s Leisure. What is a constraint on leisure? Leisure constraints occur when a person is unable to participate in a leisure activity, unable to participate as much as the person would like, or when the quality of the leisure experience is diminished for some reason. Constraints are categorized as interpersonal, intrapersonal, and structural.

Interpersonal constraints are related to a person’s relationship with others. The constraint happens due to a relationship with friends, family, or co-workers. An example of an interpersonal constraint is participating in a leisure activity because someone wants to rather than a personal desire to do so.

Intrapersonal constraints are factors that affect a person’s preference for, or interest in, an activity. For example, a person may not participate in an activity because he or she feels self-conscious about the way they look or their lack of skills.

Structural constraints are factors that intervene between the desire to participate and actual participation in an activity. A primary structural constraint that most of us cite as a reason for not participating in a preferred leisure activity is lack of time.

Who do you believe experiences more leisure constraints, men or women? It is believed that women experience more leisure constraints than men due to women’s tendency to participate for other people’s sake rather than their own.

Men and Leisure

Even though we have discussed and read about the inequities in terms of leisure for girls and women, it is important not to assume that men’s lives are richer and more satisfying as a whole than those of women. Boys have been found to be more likely to be diagnosed with mental disorders than girls, and boys are also discouraged from showing vulnerability or sensitivity, as it is often perceived in our society as a sign of weakness.

In the past, many men were pressured to adopt stereotypical “macho” roles in leisure activities. Today, men are being encouraged to play a more open, sensitive, and creative role in their recreational pursuits, as well as in domestic life and their relationships. In fact, men are resisting the distorted “macho” images, and within a broad range of recreation and leisure pursuits, are exploring healthier areas of personal expression and masculine identity. Some men are even beginning to argue that they are being oppressed and subjected to reverse sex discrimination in college athletic programs.

WEBLINK: The following weblink discusses a lawsuit filed by the National Organization for Women at California State University for sex discrimination in athletics under federal Title IX legislation. (Remember—we discussed Title IX previously in Unit 2.)
http://news.mensactivism.org/node/1204
Part 2: Sexual Orientation Factors Influencing Leisure

Leisure is affected by sexual orientation as well as by gender. The population that your readings focus on is on those people who identify themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgendered (LGBT). Even though there are more identified LGBT people than ever before, some must continue to hide their sexual orientation in the closet. Members of these groups face additional situations, challenges, and obstacles in their leisure and their life in general.

During the last 20 years, tremendous strides have been made toward acceptance of LGBT people, including the following:

- Universities are increasingly hiring LGBT faculty members to institute courses and curricula in LGBT studies and are approving student organizations that sponsor publications, events, and other programs for this population.

- Gay and lesbian community centers are being established in a number of cities to promote LGBT issues and concerns.

- Schools are allowing and encouraging students to establish Gay/Straight Alliances to show support for LGBT students.

- LGBT couples are being granted the right to legally marry.

- Some companies are extending domestic partner health benefits to their employees and their partners.

Given the numbers of LGBT people, the economic impact of this group, and the special issues faced by them, it is crucial that recreation and leisure-service agencies understand the need to offer programs, activities, and events for this group from youth to adulthood.

WEBLINKS: Following are two weblinks that show how many leisure service providers are welcoming and supporting this population. Olivia Cruise Lines focuses solely on cruises for gays and lesbians, and the Senior Action in a Gay Environment (SAGE) is a nonprofit social service organization dedicated to meeting the unique needs of the senior gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender communities.

http://www.olivia.com/

http://www.sageusa.org/
Part 2: Race and Ethnicity Factors Influencing Leisure

The racial and ethnic composition in the United States is rapidly changing. Consider, for example, the population trend of the Hispanic population becoming the largest minority in the U.S. In addition, the number of Asian Americans has almost tripled in the past 20 years.

Past research studies have shown that recreational involvement is heavily influenced by one’s race or ethnic identity. Race and ethnicity are terms that are often used interchangeably, but social scientists do differentiate between the two terms. *Race* refers to the genetic makeup of a person (biological characteristics such as eyes, hair texture, and skin color). *Ethnicity* involves possessing a unique social and cultural heritage that is passed on from one generation to another (patterns of language, family life, religion, and other customs or traits).

There is rapid change going on in the United States and Canada in relation to race and ethnicity. Given that not all forms of discrimination have been erased, it is essential that organized recreation service contribute to positive inter-group relations in community life. This can be accomplished by inviting, including, and involving all racial and ethnic groups.

Your reading discusses two theoretical frameworks used to explain differences in leisure involvement based on race and ethnicity, namely marginality and ethnicity. *Marginality* suggests that some groups have limited access to some recreation opportunities because of constraints such as lack of money, transportation, and program availability. *Ethnicity* states that different racial groups are influenced in their leisure choices by different norms, values, and socialization processes. For example, if people are not socialized or do not have the opportunity to experience certain leisure pursuits, then they do not participate as readily as someone who has had these experiences.

A three-pronged approach to ensuring that all groups feel welcome to participate in leisure services was suggested by Chavez, a leisure scholar. She stated that groups must be (1) invited, (2) included, and (3) involved. The first step is to invite racial and ethnic groups to participate in programs, activities, and events and to use available facilities. This may mean printing brochures in languages reflective of the makeup of communities as well as showing pictures of people from different racial and ethnic groups. The second step deals with including members of different groups in planning activities for their group or neighborhood. The final step indicates involving people in the organization as a whole, from the board to full-time staff members at all levels.

Within the field of recreation and parks, it is essential that managers plan programs that will contribute to inter-group understanding and favorable relations. This may be accomplished through community celebrations, holidays, ethnic and folk festivals, friendly sports competitions, and a host of other activities.

**WEBlINKS:** The following weblinks highlight ethnic and folk festivals that have positively included racial and ethnic groups into recreation programs. The first link is the North Carolina Festivals and Events’ website that provides a comprehensive listing of festivals and events available in North Carolina, many of which are ethnic festivals. The second link highlights the Skokie Festival of Cultures that is planned and implemented by the Skokie, Illinois Park District.
http://www.southfest.com/northcarolina.shtml

http://www.skokieculturefest.org/