

Building Quality Participation in Sport for Blind and Partially Sighted Athletes

A Guide for Program Leaders



**Canadian
Disability
Participation
Project**



**Le projet canadien sur
la participation sociale
des personnes en
situation de handicap**

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Preface

Overview

The Blueprint for Building Quality Participation in Sport for Blind and Partially Sighted Athletes is adapted from the Canadian Disability Participation Project's Blueprint for Building Quality Participation in Sport for Children, Youth, and Adults with a Disability. The resource is tailored to recreational sport and physical activity programs for persons who are blind or partially sighted and provides strategies for building quality participation in such programs.

The research evidence supporting the creation of this Blueprint will be presented in the following scientific paper to be published by the British Journal of Visual Impairment:

Wing, M.K., Deuille, J., Grimes, A.C., Scanlan, Z., Arbour-Nicitopoulos, K., & Latimer-Cheung, A.E. (in press). The sport experiences of blind or partially sighted people and strategies to support their participation in sport: A scoping review. *British Journal of Visual Impairment*.

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Dear Program Leaders...

As program leaders (for example, coaches, instructors, and coordinators), you play such important roles within the sport community. Your influence on athletes is lasting and it is because of your support that athletes, especially disabled athletes, are provided with the opportunity to have positive, meaningful experiences in sport.

We have created this Blueprint to help you develop the knowledge necessary to support blind and partially sighted athletes and learn more about the blind community. This blueprint is complete with strategies to support the quality participation of blind and partially sighted athletes in sport, adding to the many resources created by the Canadian Disability Participation Project (CDPP) that are available for program leaders who want to learn more about disability and supporting diverse athletes.

Based on the amazing ongoing advocacy of blind and partially sighted athletes and allies, we also created three principles that represent the unique ways that many blind and partially sighted athletes experience sport and how others can offer support to enhance their participation in sport programming.

As you engage with this Blueprint, please use these principles as a guide to help you think differently about sport participation, blindness and partial sight, and athletes' relationships with program leaders, peers, and others.

Principle 1

Consider the multi-sensory experiences associated with sport participation

- This principle reflects the many different ways that athletes experience sport.
- For example, athletes might hear the squeak of gym shoes on the floor, notice the vibrations through the floor caused by the dribbling of a basketball on the way to the net, and feel the movement of their arms as they swing a bat.
- Some blind and partially sighted athletes might not experience sport through vision, but others might navigate the playing space using light/shadows or specific types of vision (e.g., close, peripheral).

Principle 2

Embrace and respect difference

- There is so much diversity in the world and athletes are no different.
- By creating an environment that values and accepts difference, blind and partially sighted athletes might feel safe to communicate their needs, while still feeling like part of the group.
- Think about how much blind and partially sighted athletes can enrich the group by sharing their unique perspectives!

Principle 3

Embed personalization into programming

- Each athlete is unique, with distinct needs and individual preferences.
- As you create and implement a program, it might be useful to create space and opportunities for every athlete to express their needs and preferences.
- This can help you learn more about them and allow you and the athletes to shape the programming together in ways that reflect their experiences.

Ready to dive in?

Feel free to return to these principles as you learn more about quality participation and implement the strategies into your programming.

Overview of Quality Participation

Introduction

This Blueprint has been tailored to sport programs for blind and partially sighted children and youth. The purpose of this document is to introduce key concepts that underpin quality participation to coaches and volunteers to better facilitate quality sport experiences for athletes.

What is quality participation?

Quality participation is achieved when athletes with a disability view their involvement in sport as satisfying and enjoyable, and experience outcomes that they consider important.

How to build quality participation?

Quality experience is individual and dynamic, built from six building blocks: autonomy, belonging, challenge, engagement, mastery, and meaning.

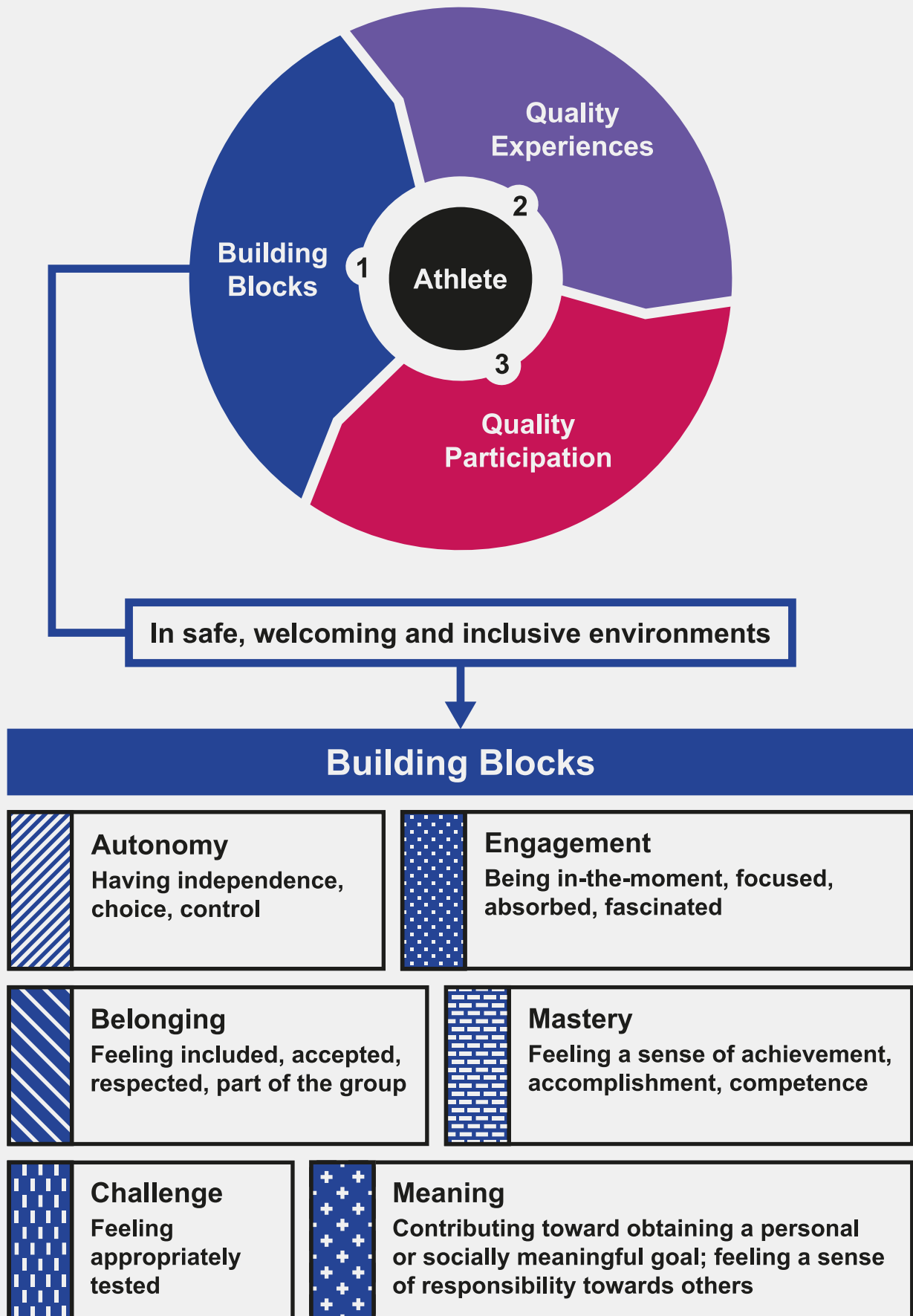
Tip: Find a diagram on the next page!

These six building blocks must be supported by safe, welcoming, and inclusive environments, including the multi-sensory, program, and social environments ([see Key Considerations section on page 11 for more information](#)).

Tip: Think about principle 1!

Repeated and sustained exposure to these building blocks can lead to quality experiences, which should contribute to lasting quality participation. Individuals will place different values on these key building blocks – the way to create a quality experience for one athlete will often not be exactly the same as for another athlete and the value athletes place on each building block may change across their lifespan.

Image 1. Depiction of the Quality Participation Framework

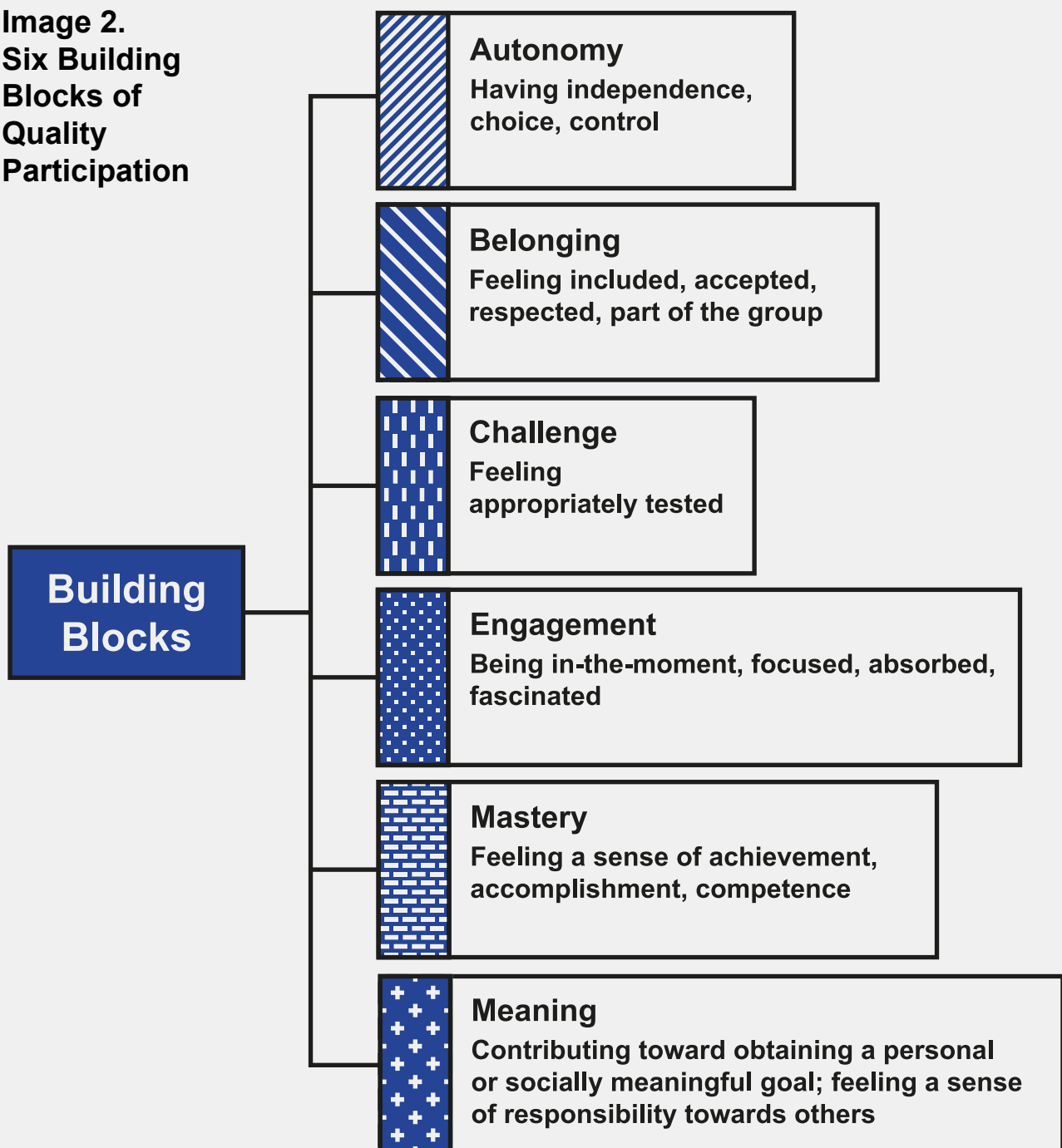


[Find a detailed description of Image 1 in the Appendix.](#)

Quick Guide to the Building Blocks of Quality Participation

Prior to using tools for building quality participation, organizations and program leaders must have a thorough understanding of the building blocks that foster quality participation. The quick guide includes a case study example that demonstrates a program accomplishing the respective building block.

Image 2.
Six Building
Blocks of
Quality
Participation



[Find a detailed description of Image 2 in the Appendix.](#)

Autonomy

Autonomy can be defined as an athlete having independence, choice, and/or control. This building block refers to the ability of the athlete to make their own choices in regard to their participation in sport.

Case Study Example:

Aaliyah (she/her) is a newcomer to Canada who has been hired as a program leader at a local sport and recreation complex in a small, rural town. She has developed and run blind sport programming in her previous community but has not met these athletes yet. In preparation for her first day of the new blind sport program, she decides to focus on the autonomy building block and implements the “multi-sensory feedback and instruction” strategy to begin fostering quality participation while creating opportunities to learn more about the new group of athletes. Aaliyah offers various multi-sensory instructions methods, creating space for athletes to voice their preferences and shape the program going forward.

Belonging

Belonging can be defined as athletes experiencing a sense of connection, acceptance, and inclusion during the sport experience.

Case Study Example:

Devon (they/them) has been running an inclusive soccer program at a recreation complex in a large city for the past year. Two blind athletes, Dakota and Ayesha, recently joined the program, but Devon did not have access to any adaptive equipment. As a result, Dakota and Ayesha mainly passed back and forth on the sidelines during practice and, when it was time for a scrimmage, Dakota and Ayesha were not comfortable joining in. To prepare for next week’s practice, Devon consulted the CDPP Blueprint for strategies to support belonging. Despite the lack of funding that Devon has for the program, they decide to engage with the “access to sport equipment” strategy by getting creative. Following directions they found online, Devon made bell balls for everyone to use, and spray painted the marking cones to increase the visibility of the playing environment. Also, Devon made extra bell balls that athletes could take home if they wanted to keep practicing.

Challenge

Challenge can be defined as feeling appropriately tested. Challenge exists when activities are appropriately tailored to the skill level or ability of each participant, while offering opportunities to realistically push skill boundaries to improve.

Case Study Example:

Yusuf (he/him) is a program leader in a rural town who recently started the community's first inclusive multi-sport program. Yusuf focuses on the challenge building block by engaging the "exploratory and active learning" strategy, hoping to create an environment that allows him and the athletes to learn more about their abilities and co-create the program. Using the same co-creation approach, Yusuf and the athletes continually re-evaluate the level of difficulty of the activities each week to make sure that athletes feel appropriately challenged.

Engagement

Engagement can be defined as feeling fully involved in the activity as they are participating. If an athlete is engaged, they are more motivated to participate.

Case Study Example:

Jean (he/him) is a French-Canadian program leader who is part of the sports team at an urban sport and recreation complex in a large community. He has been integrating strategies from the CDPP Blueprint into a multi-sport program over the past few months and, nearing the end of the summer sport season, decides to integrate another strategy to target engagement. Using the "family integration" strategy, Jean and the athletes organize a culminating event with opportunities to showcase the skills they have been practicing and extend invitations to their families. Also, Jean encourages athletes and their families to bring a piece of their cultures to share with the group. One family teaches the group to play Dene hand games, one athlete plays a song with their dads on the Irish bagpipes, and one athlete shows the group how to tie an Obi Aikido belt.

Mastery

Mastery can be defined as experiencing achievement and feeling confident in one's skills and abilities.

Case Study Example:

Meera (she/her) has been a program leader at a sport and recreation complex in a medium-sized, urban community for 3 years. Her programming has mainly taken a Sport for Life approach that emphasizes engagement. Starting a new season of programming, she is going to be working with the same group of athletes as last season who were eager to see their improvements and feel accomplished. Meera consults the blueprint for ways to foster the mastery building block and decides to implement the “tracking progress” strategy. While they are only on the third week of programming, the athletes are responding really well to the opportunity to outline personal goals which have included running faster, feeling more comfortable trying new sports and activities, practicing leadership skills, and representing their community at an out-of-town competition.

Meaning

Meaning can be defined as making each and every sport experience matter. Athletes experience meaning if they feel that their participation is helping them to achieve a valued goal.

Case Study Example:

Shay (she/her) is a program leader working with a competitive goalball team. The athletes have an upcoming tournament and have been training hard in the lead up to the event. Because of the tournament, Shay realizes that she has been focusing only on mastery and wants to integrate strategies from a second building block to help make the athletes' experiences as positive as possible and diversify the programming. Choosing the meaning building block, Shay engages with the “representation, mentorship, and role modeling” strategy and coordinates with a local school for blind and partially sighted students to give the team an opportunity to meet, teach, and inspire young blind and partially sighted students. On the way home from the event, the team shares their favorite parts of the afternoon and asks Shay to invite the students to their tournament.

Key Considerations for Quality Participation

Strategies

In the following sections, we present strategies that program leaders may be able to use to foster the building blocks of quality participation. Ideally, strategies from all six building blocks would be used to meet the needs of all athletes. However, there is no need to focus on all of the building blocks. It likely is more effective to do a good job implementing the building blocks that are most important to the majority of the athletes in the program, as opposed to doing a poor job incorporating all of them. It is helpful to organize the strategies associated with each building block by the environments, outlined below, that make up sport programming.

Tip: To begin making feasible changes, consider choosing a building block to focus on and identify some strategies to implement into programming.

Environments

To begin providing support to foster quality participation, it can be helpful to think about the different ways that people can participate in sport and many ways they can experience the world.

Tip: Remember the 3 principles. To do this, let's first think about the different parts, referred to as environments, that make up sport programming.

- **Multi-sensory** includes the facilities and features of the environment and is referred to in previous blueprints as the physical environment. We changed this wording to reflect the first principle: consider the multi-sensory environment.
- **Program** encompasses programming-specific considerations.
- **Social** includes elements of group dynamics and the many relationships formed throughout sport programming. To reflect all of these relationships, the social environment is split into the following subcategories: general, program leader, guides, family, guide dog, peers, and referees and officials.

Strategies To Support Quality Participation

Autonomy

Multi-Sensory Environment

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Access to Sport Equipment	Having a variety of equipment can provide athletes with choice.
Familiar Environment	Athletes can engage more independently when the environment is safe. Athletes are able to navigate and engage with their environment independently when it is familiar and when they feel safe.
Variation	Providing a choice to athletes between various environments allows them to be in control.

Program Environment (continued on next page)

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Preparation and Pre-Teaching	Athletes can navigate more independently when they are provided with information about the sport environment using strategies such as tactile maps. Program leaders can provide opportunities for self-directed exploration of the sport environment.
Multi-Sport Options	Providing various options ensures that athletes feel that they have control over their participation.

Program Environment

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Sport Type	Sport activities should be chosen with consideration for how blind and partially sighted athletes experience the world to support their ability to participate independently. Particular activities can also provide a freedom of movement that blind and partially sighted athletes do not often have the opportunity to experience in a sighted world
Accessible Policies and Rule Modifications	Athletes should be supported through rule modification and consulted in the modification process.
Individual Level of Support	When one-on-one support is available, athletes are able to have more control over their experiences.

Social Environment – General (continued on next page)

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Multiple Supporters	Athletes have choice in who supports them, how they receive support, and when they are supported. Having multiple guides available also ensures that athletes are supported, despite any changes in the availability of supporters.
Group Environment	Program leaders can allow athletes to have control over the group with whom they are paired. Also, ensuring continuity in the groups can support athletes' ability to engage independently.
Status of Disability	Program leaders should affirm an athlete's experiences of disability as valid and recognize the diverse ways of engaging with the world that do not rely solely on sight, as opposed to viewing blindness and partial sight as a deficit.

Social Environment – General

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Unique Pathways	Athletes should have control over their pathway as athletes including level of competition, and sport type.

Social Environment – Program Leader

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Multi-Sensory Instruction and Feedback	Program leaders can provide athletes with various choices for instruction. Also, program leaders and athletes can develop unique strategies together to fit their needs and the sport context.
Autonomy Support	Program leaders should provide athletes with options and, when using tactile and physical instructional techniques, should promote bodily autonomy.
Interpersonal Skills	Program leaders should cultivate a space in which athletes feel comfortable sharing their needs and provide options to athletes.
Knowledge, Skills, and Learning	When program leaders have adequate knowledge and skills, they are able to offer numerous instructional techniques for athletes to choose from. Additionally, athletes should be provided control over their participation and have autonomy to define themselves as athletes.
Exploratory and Collaborative Learning	By approaching instruction in this manner, the athlete has control over their learning.

Social Environment – Guide Dog

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Support from Guide Dogs	Guide dogs can support the independence of athletes by providing navigation and orientation support. Program leaders can offer numerous options related to when and where athletes involve guide dogs.

Social Environment – Peers

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Representation, Mentorship, and Role Modeling	Representation and role models help to empower athletes to exercise more independence.
Group (sighted peer) Environment	Athletes should be encouraged to support one another to create opportunities for peers to be independent.

Belonging

Multi-Sensory Environment

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Access to Sport Equipment	Sport equipment that is perceivable and engaging for diverse athletes is available, fostering a sense of respect for them as athletes. Having access can address barriers to participation and contribute to feelings of acceptance and belonging.
Accessibility Including Access to Sport Equipment	Accessibility and environmental modification ensure all athletes are able to participate alongside the group and contribute to the feelings of acceptance.
Familiar Environment	The environment is safe for athletes with diverse abilities and identities, allowing them to participate alongside the group.
Variation	Providing many different environments during programming creates feelings of acceptance and inclusion.
Environmental Modification and Enrichment	Adding multi-sensory elements that are perceivable and provide ongoing feedback to athletes helps to ensure that blind and partially sighted athletes feel they are part of the group and feel that their experiences are valued.

Program Environment (continued on next page)

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Representing Community	Athletes feel respected as part of the group when they are able to represent their community or group during sport, such as being a recognized university sports team.

Program Environment

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Preparation and Pre-Teaching	When they have a foundational understanding of the activity, athletes can follow the programming and participate as part of the group.
Multi-Sport Options	When provided options, athletes feel respected as members of the group and feel that their perspectives are valued.
Structure and Schedule	By providing structure and a schedule shared by numerous/all athletes, athletes feel part of a group, especially when engaging with virtual programming.
Sport Type	The chosen sport should be accessible and facilitate the participation of blind and partially sighted athletes and allow them to be part of the group. Culturally relevant activities are particularly helpful for cultivating acceptance.
Accessible Policies and Rule Modifications	Programs and their policies should facilitate the participation of blind and partially sighted athletes. The cost to participate in programming is attainable for athletes and accommodations for blind and partially sighted athletes should not have additional costs.

Social Environment – Program Leader (continued on next page)

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Multi-Sensory Instruction and Feedback	Program leaders can affirm athletes as valued members of the group when they receive instruction and feedback that is appropriate.

Social Environment – Program Leader

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Autonomy Support	Program leaders should reject assumptions about how blindness and partially sight impacts the experiences of athlete and their needs in sport context. Disability should not be blamed for an athletes' skill level or mistakes. Blind and partially sighted athletes feel more accepted as part of the group when disability is defined more interpersonally and experientially, rather than focused on the medical and rehabilitation models.
Role Development	Program leaders should create an environment that values differences and uniqueness, minimizing the othering experienced by blind and partially sighted athletes and other marginalized identities.
Interpersonal Skills	Providing encouragement to one another contributes to feelings of acceptance.
Knowledge, Skills, and Learning	Athletes experience a sense of belonging when they are able to contribute to the relationships they build, receiving and giving support. Athletes also value the ability to reconnect with the individuals they form relationships with at future programming.
Exploratory and Collaborative Learning	Program leaders should elicit the opinions of athletes and integrate them into programming on an ongoing basis, especially since athletes may not have previous experiences with sport.

Social Environment – Family

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Family Integration	Program leaders can foster a sense of acceptance among the group when families are invited to become involved in programming.

Social Environment – Guide Dog

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Support from Guide Dogs	Program leaders can create opportunities to involve guide dogs in programming, which can encourage social interactions with others in sport contexts. To support this, it is important that program leaders know and remind others that guide dogs are working and need to focus on doing their jobs.

Social Environment – Peers

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Group (Blind and Partially Sighted Peers) Environment	Participating alongside blind and partially sighted peers (i.e., that share their experiences) contributes to feelings of acceptance and being a member of a group.
Representation, Mentorship, and Role Modeling	Athletes feel they belong when they see themselves represented within the sport environment, when they are able to be role models for other blind and partially sighted athletes, and when sighted peers value their presence as authentic representation of the blind/partial sight community.
Group (Sighted Peer) Environment	To cultivate feelings of acceptance, program leaders should encourage an environment of learning and willingness to learn about the experiences of blind and partially sighted athletes. Sighted peers contribute to feelings of acceptance by providing support, such as verbal descriptions of activities and navigation information, to blind and partially sighted peers.

Challenge

Multi-Sensory Environment

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Access to Sport Equipment	Having access to multi-sensory equipment or working to find creative alternatives supports athletes in attaining an appropriate level of challenge, while avoiding frustration due to barriers.
Familiar Environment	Athletes can identify and engage with an appropriate level of challenge when in a safe environment.

Program Environment

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Multi-Sport Options	Athletes can select activities that are most appropriate for them, their needs, and their strengths which allows them to feel adequately challenged without experiencing frustration.
Sport Type	The chosen activity should allow athletes to feel challenged as athletes, without being frustratingly difficult and inaccessible.
Individual Level Support	Supporters are available to identify an appropriate level of challenge for each athlete, tailoring the activities to each athlete and providing one-on-one support.

Social Environment – General

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Status of Disability	Program leaders should expect an appropriate level from athletes based on their individual abilities, rather than based on assumptions. Athletes should be challenged, not overprotected.
Unique Pathways	Athletes should be encouraged to participate at levels that suit their abilities and goals, progressing to an appropriate level of challenge.

Social Environment – Program Leader (continued on next page)

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Autonomy Support	Program leaders should be supportive without being overprotective or intrusive, allowing athletes to control over the level of challenge that is most appropriate for them.
Interpersonal Skills	Program leaders should cultivate an environment in which athletes are comfortable providing input into the level of challenge they experience.
Knowledge, Skills, and Learning	Program leaders should provide athletes with an appropriate level of challenge based on progression of skill and varying degrees of complexity for tasks.
Exploratory and Collaborative Learning	Through exploration, athletes can identify an appropriate level of challenge and program leaders can form appropriate expectations for the athlete's abilities. Working together, they can continually re-evaluate the level of challenge as they progress through programming.

Social Environment – Program Leader

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Tracking Progress	Tracking and communicating an athlete's progress serves as an important exercise to evaluate whether the level of challenge is appropriate and if progressions may be helpful.

Social Environment – Guide Dog

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Support from Guide Dogs	Guide dogs can provide the one-on-one support required for athletes to find an appropriate level of challenge.

Engagement

Multi-Sensory Environment

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Access to Sport Equipment	The availability of multi-sensory equipment that reflects how blind and partially sighted interact with the world can decrease frustration and help athletes stay absorbed in the activity.
Familiar Environment	When in a safe and/or familiar environment, athletes can be more present in the activity.
Variation	Different environments provide a variety of stimulation and feelings that help athletes be in the moment.
Environmental Modification	Athletes are more absorbed in the activity when the environment is interesting and engaging in ways that are perceivable to blind and partially sighted athletes as they navigate through the sport environment and engage in play, increasing feelings of safety and ensuring the activity is engaging for them. Examples include adding musical elements, being outdoors, or using paired movements (tactile).

Program Environment (continued on next page)

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Preparation and Pre-Teaching	By engaging in pre-teaching, program leaders mitigate fatigue and avoid dividing the attention of athletes during activities. Also, this pre-teaching avoids feelings of frustration and being left behind.
Multi-Sport Options	Athletes are more absorbed in the moment when they can choose an activity that is most engaging for them.

Program Environment

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Structure and Schedule	Athletes feel more in-the-moment when supported by a set schedule and program structure.
Sport Type	Activities that are most engaging for athletes include culturally relevant activities that reflect the experiences of the blind/partial sight community, novel activities, and activities that allow athletes to experience new embodied sensations. Athletes are able to focus when they feel the activity is safe.
Individual Level Support	One-on-one support is helpful to keep athletes absorbed in the activity.

Social Environment – General (continued on next page)

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Group Environment	It is most engaging when athletes experience sensory attunement (i.e., feeling and being aware of the different types of sensations during participation, particularly partnered participation) and there is harmony among the group.
Status of Disability	The attitudes towards disability should foster a safe social environment, free from ableism, to allow athletes to stay more focused on the activity, as opposed to worrying about discrimination and the need to defend themselves.
Encouragement	Verbal encouragement provided to athletes helps to keep them focused on the activity and enriches the multi-sensory environment.

Social Environment – General

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Forming Reciprocal Relationships	Relationships that foster sensory attunement between partners are most engaging, though safety should remain a focus even when partners experience flow during activities.

Social Environment – Program Leader

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Multi-Sensory Instruction and Feedback	Program leaders engage athletes when they provide instruction and feedback that is relevant to each athlete and makes sense to them.
Autonomy Support	Program leaders should tailor instruction to the participant by eliciting their goals as athletes.
Role Development	Program leaders should develop roles that are of interest to athletes and recognize the roles defined by the athletes.
Knowledge, Skills, and Learning	Program leaders engage athletes when they provide instruction and feedback that is relevant to Verbal encouragement provided to athletes helps to keep them focused on the activity and enriches the multi-sensory environment.
Exploratory and Collaborative Learning	Relationships that foster sensory attunement between partners are most engaging, though safety should remain a focus even when partners experience flow during activities.
Tracking Progress	Program leaders should record progress and communicate specific feedback to athletes to maintain their interest in the programming.

Social Environment – Guides

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Knowledge, Skills, and Learning (Guides)	Guides should be trained to effectively support athletes to contribute to a safe environment in which athletes can remain in the moment while participating.

Social Environment - Family

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Family Integration	Program leaders can involve parents and siblings in engaging athletes during sport. Culminating events at the end of programs are particularly useful.

Social Environment – Guide Dogs

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Support from Guide Dogs	Guide dogs can provide navigation and orientation support to allow athletes to focus on skill development and mitigate fatigue during participation.

Social Environment – Peers

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Group (Sighted Peer) Environment	The willingness of sighted peers to learn about the experiences of blind and partially sighted athletes and the ability of blind and partially sighted athletes share about their experience encourages athletes to be in the moment.

Mastery

Multi-Sensory Environment

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Accessibility including Environmental Modification	Accessibility and environmental modifications ensure athletes' needs are met, allowing them to improve their skills and feel capable. Examples include larger cones, varying the heights of goals/nets, brighter coloured goal posts, and adjusted lighting in the facility.
Familiar Environment	Program leaders can ensure that athletes have time to acclimatize to the sport environment, allowing athletes to achieve their goals without fear. Athletes feel more competent and work towards their goals without competing cognitive demands when their environment is familiar.

Program Environment (continued on next page)

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Preparation and Pre-Teaching	Program leaders can provide navigation and orientation information by using tactile maps prior to the start of programming. Common terminology should be established to ensure effective communication.
Multi-Sport Options	Being able to choose an activity that is most appropriate for them allows athletes to feel more competent.
Structure and Schedule	Athletes are able to feel competent and a sense of achievement when their athletic participation and development is supported by structured sport programming.

Program Environment

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Sport Type	The chosen sport should be appropriate for the strengths and needs of athletes with VI, while also mitigating potential risks (e.g., retinal detachment during ball games played at head height). Culturally relevant and/or novel activities are particularly important to cultivate a sense of achievement.
Accessible Policies and Rule Modification	Programs should be accessible to blind and partially sighted athletes and program leaders should be willing to modify when necessary. Modifications include additional rules (e.g., playing below head height), changes to the flow of play, the addition of tactile elements, changes to the skills required (e.g., handing off the ball instead of throwing), and increased communication through described movement.
Individual level Support	Athletes develop a sense of achievement when support is provided on an individualized level.

Social Environment – General (continued on next page)

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Multiple Supporters	When multiple supporters are available to provide support, they can be positioned at different locations of the sport environment to support athletes throughout sport participation.
Group Environment	Classification of athletes should not be based solely on level of sight or on perceived deficits. Athletes should be provided the opportunity to work in pairs and develop relational efficacy.

Social Environment – General

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Status of Disability	Program leaders should not blame low performance on an athlete's disability and should not see their disability as determining the among they can achieve.
Diversity	Program leaders should create opportunities for athletes to feel comfortable and be able to communicate their needs, particularly in cases where such needs are not visible, to ensure they receive the support they need to feel competent.
Encouragement	Providing encouragement to athletes contributes to their feelings of competence and supplements other task-specific feedback to support skill development.
Forming Reciprocal Relationships	Athletes feel more competent when they develop relational efficacy with a partner through co-active movement and sensory attunement.
Unique Pathways	Athletes feel more competent when they develop relational efficacy with a partner through co-active movement and sensory attunement.

Social Environment – Program Leader (continued on next page)

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Multi-Sensory Instruction and Feedback	Program leaders should provide task-specific feedback to support an athlete's development and sense of achievement. This can be verbal, tactile, or any other communication strategy developed with the athlete.

Social Environment – Program Leader

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Autonomy Support	Provide the athlete with numerous options for instructional techniques. A person-centred approach to coaching is particularly useful.
Role Development	Program leaders should recognize the contributions of athletes while in each role.
Interpersonal Skills	Program leaders should engage in open communication about the preferences and needs of athletes to support their development.
Knowledge, Skills, and Learning	Program leaders use effective instructional methods, such as whole part whole, repetitive practice, and physical guidance, to support athletes in developing a sense of competence.
Exploratory and Collaborative Learning	Program leaders should support athletes in exploring their abilities and potential through guided discovery, which helps program leaders learn more about how to effectively support the athlete.
Tracking Progress	Communicating the athlete's progress cultivates a sense of achievement and competence.

Social Environment – Family

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Family Integration	Families can contribute to feelings of competence, particularly during virtual programs.

Social Environment – Peers

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Group (Blind and Partially Sighted Peers) Environment	Program leaders should encourage peers to support one another to achieve their goals and develop as athletes.
Representation, Mentorship, and Role Modeling	Participating alongside other blind and partially sighted athletes empowers athletes to feel competent and achieve their goals.

Social Environment – Referees and Officials

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Multi-Sensory Feedback/Calls	Referees should recognize the importance of communicating in ways that are understandable for athletes.

Meaning

Multi-Sensory Environment

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Access to Sport Equipment	Access to sport equipment ensures that athletes can contribute to personally and socially meaningful goals. Collaborative efforts are made with athletes to find creative solutions in the absence of particular equipment.

Program Environment

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Representing Community	Athletes feel they are able to contribute meaningfully as representatives of their communities, particularly by promoting the visibility of disability.
Preparation and Pre-Teaching	Preparing adequately for activities ensures that all athletes are able to contribute to the programming. Well-developed programming can also integrate meaningful elements, such as the opportunity to gain new knowledge or engage with a new culture.
Sport Type	When provided options, athletes can select the activity that allows them to work towards their goals.
Individual level	Support Athletes feel a responsibility to others when working in a pair.

Social Environment – General

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Group Environment	All members of the group feel a responsibility to be mutually supportive, cultivate the accessibility and safety of the activity, and ensure all athletes can independently engage. The group environment emphasizes participation over competition and winning.
Status of Disability	The enjoyment and participation of all athletes should be valued, and all people should feel a responsibility to support the participation of one another.
Diversity	Diversity is particularly meaningful when differences are embraced, recognizing that each athlete contributes uniquely to the sport program and are deserving of support.
Encouragement	Program leaders should encourage athletes in ways that are genuine, as opposed to attitudes that may come from low expectations, ableism, or objectification.
Forming Reciprocal Relationships	Creating opportunities for athletes to form relationships is meaningful, particularly for athletes who are blind or partially sighted who can experience social isolation. Also, athletes feel a sense of responsibility to others when they are able to form relationships.
Unique Pathways	Program leaders should have knowledge of the paralympic sport programs available for athletes wishing to become more involved in the paralympic community.

Social Environment – Program Leader

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Role Development	Athletes feel they can contribute to meaningful goals when in each role.
Interpersonal Skills	Program leaders should demonstrate genuineness and patience when engaging with athletes.
Exploratory and Collaborative Learning	The reciprocity of this relationship helps athletes feel a sense of responsibility to others.
Tracking Progress	Highlighting an athlete's progress affirms their progress towards meaningful goals. Also, providing specific milestones in an athlete's progress may introduce insincerity to the feedback.

Social Environment – Family

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Family Integration	Including siblings and parents in programming can be meaningful for athletes.

Social Environment – Peers (continued on next page)

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Group (blind and partially sighted peers) environment	Athletes should be encouraged to develop shared goals during sport programming.
Representation, Mentorship, and Role Modelling	Having the opportunity to mentor others or be authentic representation of blind and partially sighted athletes and for other blind and partially sighted athletes.

Social Environment – Peers

Strategy	How this might look in programming
Group (sighted peer) Environment	Program leaders should encourage peers to define shared goals and cultivate interdependence with one another. Peers should also be encouraged to learn from one another and demonstrate a willingness to learn about blindness and partial sight.

Build a Plan to Enhance Quality Participation

SWOT Analysis

Strengths:

Which building blocks are your program's strength areas? How well do these strengths align with your program priorities?

Weaknesses:

Which building blocks align with your program priorities but are not strength areas in your program currently?

Opportunities:

Identify up to three building blocks your program could focus on to improve athletes' quality participation. Identify strategies your program could incorporate to support these building blocks. Jot down some notes about how these strategies can be implemented into your program. Consider if there are any upcoming opportunities for implementing these strategies such as a training camp, funding opportunities, etc.

Threats:

Identify any barriers or threats you foresee impeding the implementation of your strategies to target these building blocks.

Appendix: Long Descriptions of Images

Image 1: Depiction of the Quality Participation Framework

A diagram depicting the Quality Participation framework. At the top, a small circle labelled “Athlete” is encircled by three numbered arrows, each pointing to the next. Arrow 1 is labelled “Building Blocks”. Arrow 2 is labelled “Quality Experiences”. Arrow 3 is labelled “Quality Participation”. A line comes out of Arrow 1, labelled “Building Blocks”, and passes through a box that reads “In safe, welcoming and inclusive environments” to point to another box that also reads “Building Blocks”. Below this are arranged six more boxes containing each of the six building blocks and their definitions. They are:

Autonomy: having independence, choice, control.

Belonging: feeling included, accepted, respected, part of the group.

Challenge: feeling appropriately tested.

Engagement: being in-the-moment, focused, absorbed, fascinated.

Mastery: feeling a sense of achievement, accomplishment, competence.

Meaning: contributing towards obtaining a personal or socially meaningful goal; feeling a sense of responsibility to others.

[Find Image 1 on page 6.](#)

Image 2: Six Building Blocks of Quality Participation

A diagram containing the six building blocks of Quality Participation and their definitions. These are:

Autonomy: having independence, choice, control.

Belonging: feeling included, accepted, respected, part of the group.

Challenge: feeling appropriately tested.

Engagement: being in-the-moment, focused, absorbed, fascinated.

Mastery: feeling a sense of achievement, accomplishment, competence.

Meaning: contributing towards obtaining a personal or socially meaningful goal; feeling a sense of responsibility to others.

[Find Image 2 on page 7.](#)