

The Importance of Health in Residential Living Experiences

Introducing a walking group to assist with mental health

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Introduction

Bridgewell empowers people with disabilities and other life challenges by offering an unparalleled range of social and human services. The organization takes a people-centric approach to services with include:

- A shared living environment
- Daily programming
- Outpatient treatment
- Recovery services
- Educational experiences (Bridgewell,n.d.)



Internship objective

To create a walking group for residential individuals where the goal for all participants is to walk a total of 3 miles by the end of the program.

Related Literature

"Walking offers the best of both worlds. It gives the physical benefits of exercise while improving your emotional well-being. In fact, regular walking helps alleviate the symptoms associated with mental illness, such as anxiety and depression" (Brennan, 2021, para 1).

"For people with disabilities, physical activity can help support daily living activities and independence" (Hollis et al., 2020, para 2).

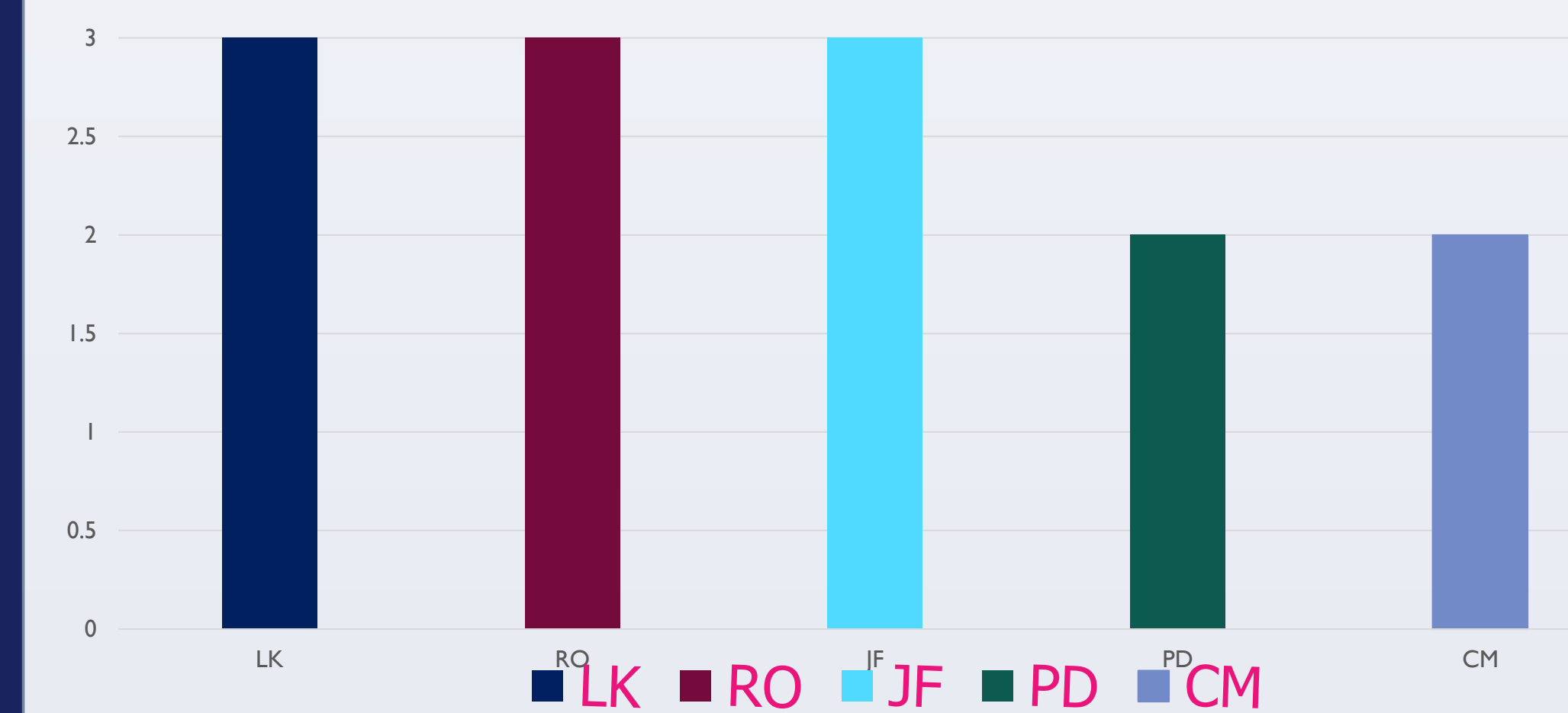
"Doctors and other health professionals can promote physical activity among adult patients with disabilities. Adults with disabilities face barriers to getting aerobic physical exercise. Some physical activity is better than none, and adults who participate in any amount of physical activity gain some health benefits" (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021, para 2).

Materials & Methods

- Set up a time and date for the walking group and the meeting spot
- Determine a schedule of 1 hour a day, three times a week depending on the individual schedule
- Obtain fitness tracking watches for all individuals
- Collect health background information on the participants:
 - ❖ Medical conditions
 - ❖ Physical ability of the clients
 - ❖ Health barriers, and equipment issues
 - ❖ Proper footwear.
- Research different exercise programs for individuals with Specific physical and behavioral needs
- Communicate with individuals about proper preparation such as:
 - ❖ Appropriate stretching
 - ❖ Water consumption of water/food before & after exercise
 - ❖ Proper clothing
- Understand individual Behavioral plans.
 - ❖ Social attention
 - ❖ Escaping (running away, getting out)
 - ❖ Negative reinforcement

Participant data and observation

Residential Individual Demonstration 3 miles walking Goal



Conclusions

- It was challenging to have individuals dedicate walking time together primarily because they were together at home and during the day program.
- The organization and recruitment of individuals to walk daily wasn't an easy task.
- A walking group setting allowed peers to share experiences and challenges and grow together socially. It allowed some of them to complete their individual support plan goals, which were to complete some exercise. Some of them started to feel better about their overall health as they continued to stay active.
- As the lead, I wanted the individuals not to be judged but to create an open atmosphere of understanding based on everyday experiences and growth opportunities. Also, I wanted to create a routine for the people involved in this group, a routine that leads to independence and physical well-being.

Result

- We started with five individuals.
- Total Weeks seven, and the walking group was supposed to be twice a week but was changed to once every other week
- Two of the participants chose to quit two weeks before the end of the program.
- The three individuals who remained in the group completed 3 miles and were rewarded a Dunkin donut card and a dinner outing.

References :

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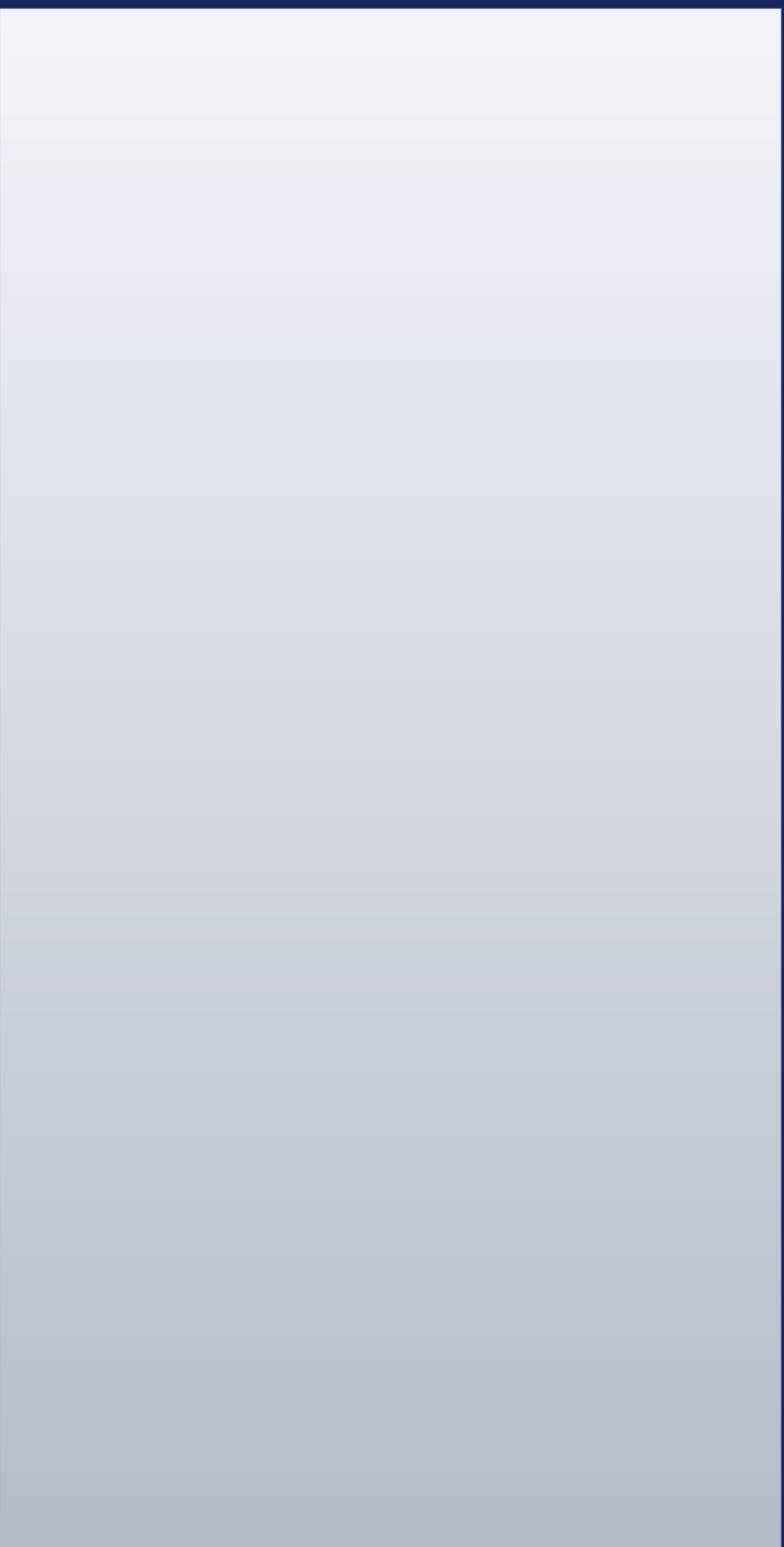
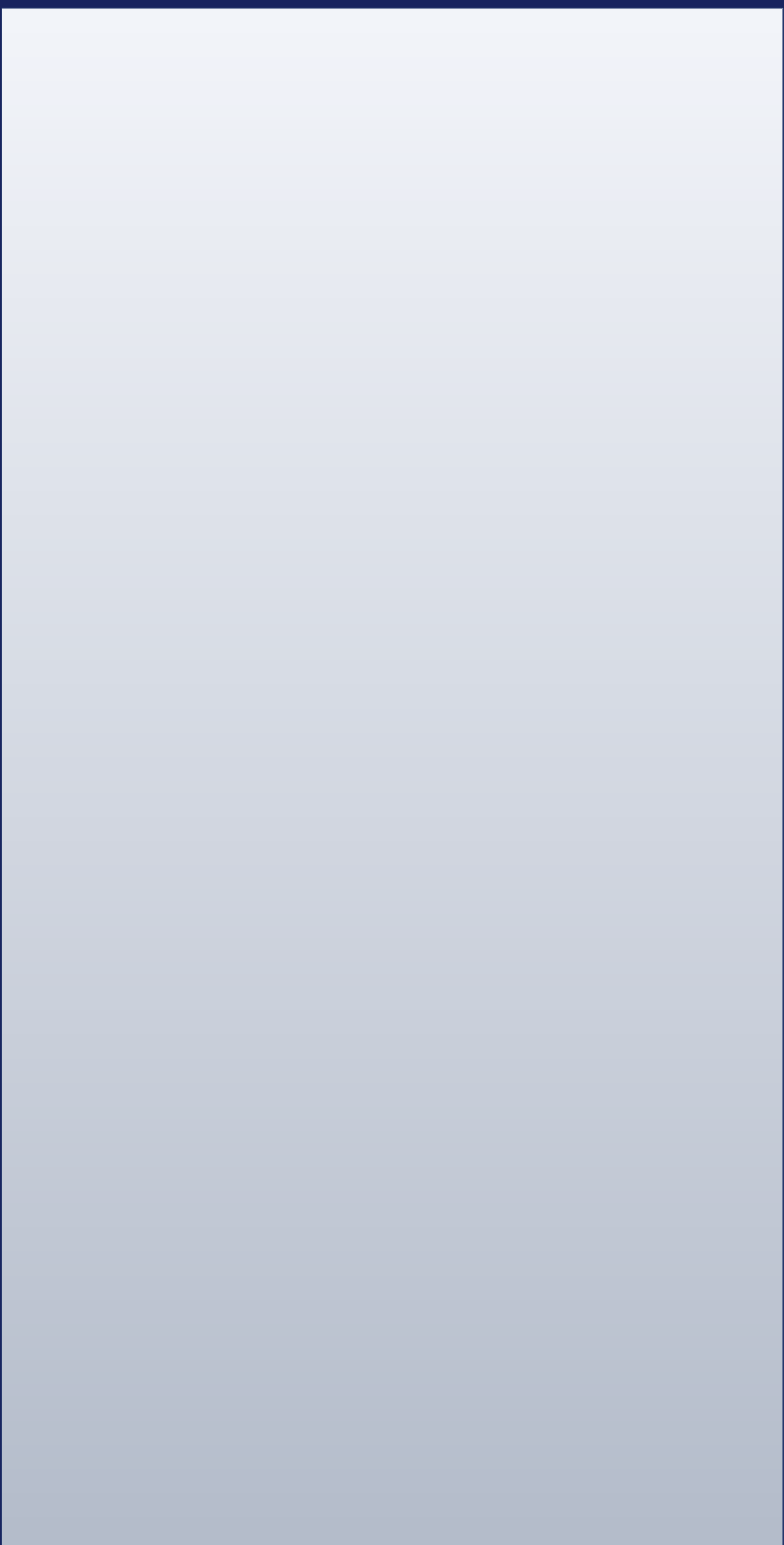
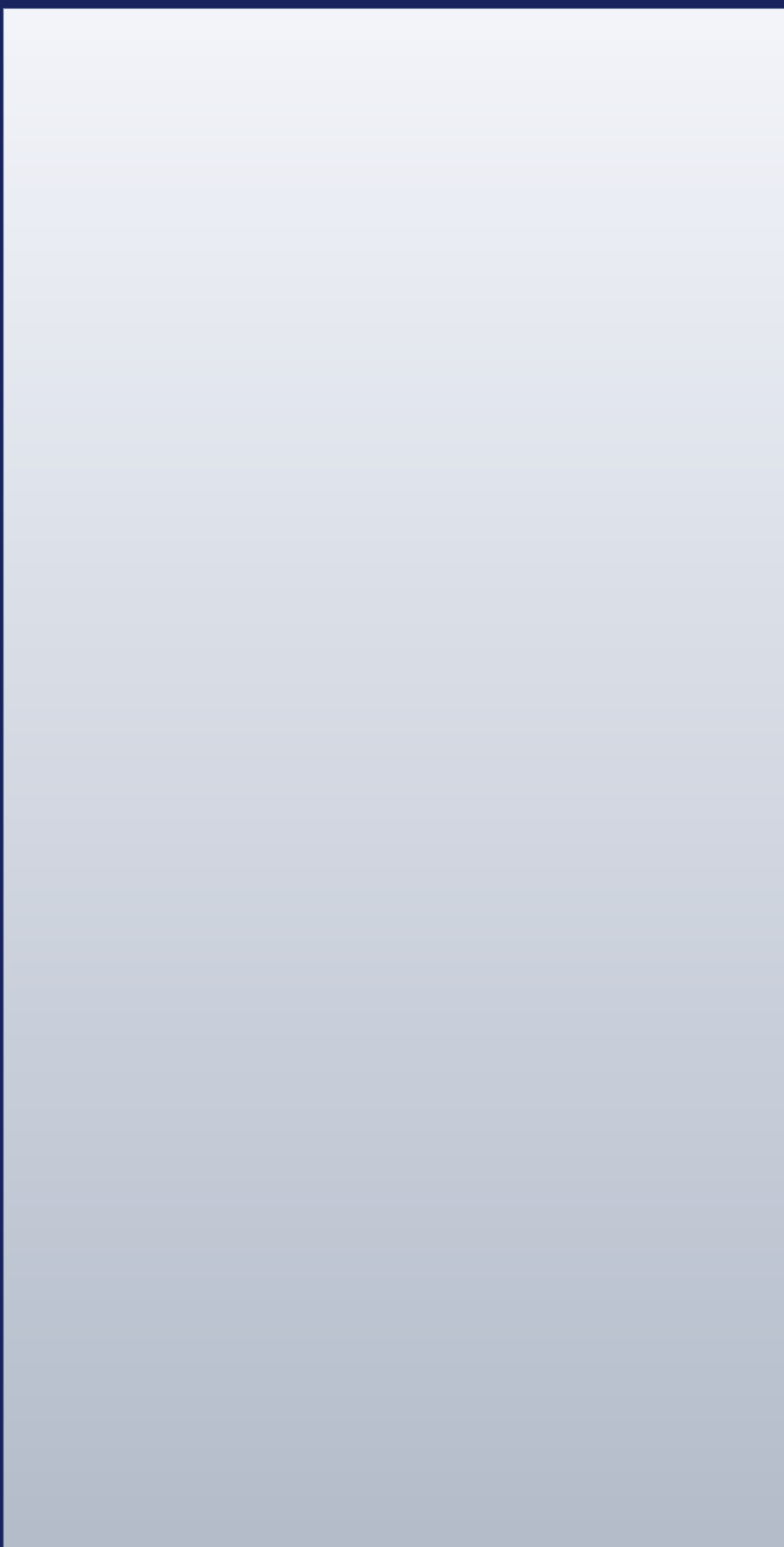
Acknowledgement

To the MGH Behavioral Health Workforce Initiative: Thank you for this award! I can now register for my remaining summer classes and graduate this year. I so appreciate it .





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