

Social Support and Companionship Among Active African American Women

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Objective: To examine the role of physical activity (PA) companions in supporting PA participation among African American women. **Methods:** Data were collected through in-depth interviews and focus groups. Fifteen physically active African American women participated in the study. Grounded theory data analysis techniques were used to develop a taxonomy depicting roles of PA companions for African American women. **Results:** PA companions

functioned in 4 different roles: motivational, social, facilitative, and instructional. Supportive behaviors associated with each role were also elucidated. **Conclusions:** These findings provide an understanding for the function of companions in sustaining active lifestyle that can be used to inform intervention development.

Key words: physical activity, African Americans, women, qualitative research, social support

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