

# Barriers and facilitators to sport and physical activity



# Know How to Take Care +

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From community centres to gymnasiums, from collective kitchens to emergency food services, across the island of Montreal, there is a myriad of organisations and activities that seek to help Montrealers live healthy, active lives. However, these services do not always take into consideration the growing diversity of people in Montreal. This can further entrench inequality to accessing these community services.

1 In these groups, we counted on the participation of non-binary, agender, gender fluid, and trans people.

2 Institut national de santé publique du Québec (INSPQ), Division Régional de Santé Publique (DRSP), Ville de Montréal, Agence Uena, École de kinésiologie et des sciences de l'activité physique de l'Udem, École de santé publique de l'Udem, YMCA Québec, Sports Montréal, Carrefour Solidaire - Centre communautaire d'alimentation, Dispensaire diététique de Montréal.

3 The populations we met included black people and people of Asian, Latin American and Arab origin. For the purposes of this research, we have considered both immigrant and non-immigrant populations, as well as different migration statuses.

4 The target neighborhoods included Lachine, LaSalle, Montréal-Nord, Saint-Michel, Ahuntsic, and Cartierville

Know How to Take Care + is a research-action project, led by academics and public managers in partnership with community organizations, speaking directly with underserved populations about the barriers and facilitators to sports and physical activity (SPA) and healthy eating services. The goal is to foster these services to be better adapted to the needs of everyone in Montreal.

A research project was conducted to identify barriers and facilitants to these services. The results will be used to plan better adapted services that meet populations' needs.

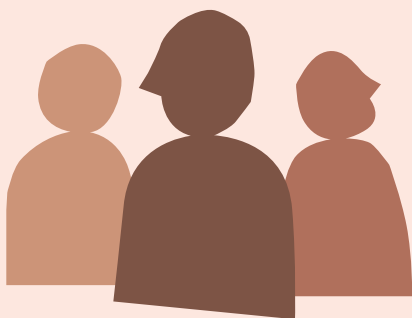
Various forms of data collection were used: interviews, focus groups, and a 40-question survey on health, eating habits, and physical activity.

Gender-based and intersectional analysis (GBA+) was used for data collection and analysis.

A total of 60 people participated in 12 focus groups. For each of the target populations (2SLGBTQ+ and immigrant and/or racialized families), discussions were divided by gender identities: female, male, and those who do not identify with either of these two gender identities.<sup>1</sup>

The Know How to Take Care + project is led by Montréal - Métropole en santé (MMS), with the guidance of an advisory committee made up of 10 organizations,<sup>2</sup> spanning the governmental, non-governmental, and university sectors.

## This research project involved 60 people from two targeted populations



Immigrant and/or racialized families<sup>3</sup> from disadvantaged neighbourhoods<sup>4</sup> (36)



2SLGBTQ+ communities (24)

# Highlights

The results presented in this document are based on the testimonies of 36 people from immigrant and/or racialized families who participated in the research activities of the Know How to Take Care + project. Among the people we met, dancing, swimming, cycling, and walking were among the most popular sports and physical activities (SPA)! Know How to Take Care + highlighted the barriers and facilitators to the practice of SPAs by immigrant and/or racialized families. These families identified several solutions to facilitate access.

**"Even getting out of the house [in winter] is difficult, even if you go to another enclosed space."**

Participant in the women's group, Lachine and LaSalle

**"I did zumba classes because I like to move, I like to dance a bit, I like music too and it was an activity I can do with other ladies, and I can also bring my child with me."**

Participant in the women's group, Saint-Michel, Ahuntsic-Cartierville

## Barriers

The lack of diversity among SPA users amplifies the feeling that the families are not welcomed in these spaces. Adapting to the winter climate remains the biggest barrier for these families.

SPA schedules are sometimes incompatible with their other family and professional responsibilities. Some set parameters for activities that don't match their needs or those of their children.

The high cost of certain SPAs and the equipment needed to practice them hinders access.

## Facilitating factors

SPAs that are easily accessible are those that are affordable, close to home and allow families to spend time together and keep children occupied.

SPAs, which enable people to meet new people and break the isolation that sometimes comes with immigration, are much appreciated.

**"Some adult courses are too late for family life with a young child."**

Participant in the women's group, Saint-Michel, Ahuntsic-Cartierville

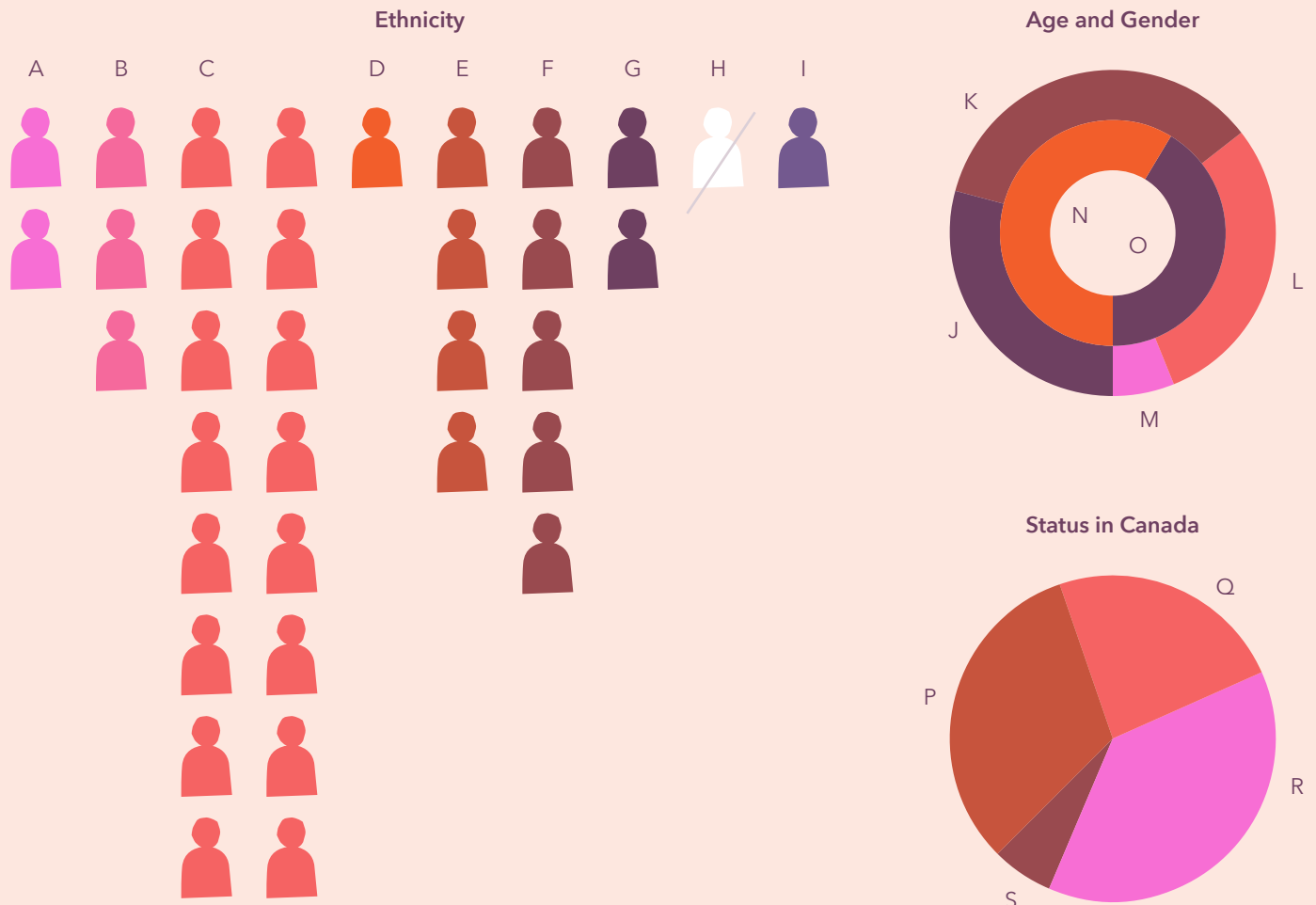
## Possible solutions

Several solutions could be implemented to improve access to SPAs for these families, including:

- 1 **Offering** introductory and coaching sessions for winter sports.
- 2 **Encouraging** access to indoor spaces for free play and exercise in the winter.
- 3 **Offering** a sliding scale for the cost of activities, according to the income of participants.

# Participant characteristics

The research involved 36 people in focus groups and 34 completed questionnaires.



## Ethnicity

A	2	Asian (China, Philippines, Japan, Korea; Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam)
B	3	Southeast Asian (India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka)
C	16	Black
D	1	Black, Latin American or Caribbean (Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Mexico)
E	4	Latin American or Caribbean (Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Mexico)
F	5	Middle Eastern or North African (Armenia, Egypt, Iran, Libya, Lebanon, Morocco, Turkey)
G	2	Born of a mixed union (one or both parents from previous groups)
H	0	Caucasian
I	1	Prefer not to answer

## Age

J	10	25-34
K	12	35-44
L	10	45+
M	2	Prefer not to answer

## Gender

N	20	Female
O	14	Male

## Status in Canada

P	11	I am a Canadian citizen
Q	8	I am a permanent resident of Canada/Québec
R	13	I am an asylum seeker (refugee claimant)
S	2	I am a temporary or non-permanent resident (foreign students or temporary workers)

# SPA preferences and practices

In terms of preferences, dancing and swimming emerged as the favorite activities in the women's groups, even though certain barriers to swimming were raised, such as the lack of different open swim times, the limited number of pools in the neighborhoods, and not knowing how to swim.

For men, the preference is to play baseball, soccer, basketball or tennis.

Cycling was cited by both men and women as a popular activity to enjoy alone or with children. However, some women and their children are still concerned about learning how to ride a bike and how to access one.

Finally, walking is appreciated by all groups, even if it is considered more difficult in winter.



# Fundamental barriers to practicing SPAs

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**Seasonal and social barriers**



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**Logistical barriers**



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**Economic barriers**



# Seasonal and social barriers

Respondents mentioned the difficulty of adapting to the winter climate, the lack of diversity among users and the resulting feeling of not being welcome as obstacles to practice SPAs.

**"I'd say it's a bit difficult for women because we don't see them. For example, we see more Quebecers doing it [skating]. Not many immigrants."**

Participant in the women's group, Montreal North

**"There's a lack of accessible indoor spaces. So winter is really something that prevents a lot of people [from having access to SPA] because you have to have access to indoor spaces and that's expensive."**

Participant in the men's group, Saint-Michel, Ahuntsic-Cartierville

**"Even getting out of the house [in winter] is difficult, even if you go to another enclosed space."**

Participant in the women's group, Lachine and LaSalle

**"I walk in summer too. In winter, no, because I can slip..."**

Participant in the men's group, Lachine and LaSalle





# Logistical barriers

The difficulty of reconciling SPA schedules with their other family and professional responsibilities, and certain activity parameters that don't correspond to their needs or those of their children, represent barriers for immigrant and/or racialized families.

**"Some adult courses are too late for family life with a young child."**

Participant in the women's group, Saint-Michel, Ahuntsic-Cartierville

**"I'm talking for example about skating, there's only one hour, one and a half hour of free exercise so it's not much for the kids, as soon as they start to enjoy it, we have to leave, so that's the time limit on activities."**

Testimonial, women's group, Montreal North



**"I'm a woman, I work, I'm the one who does the cooking, all that, the housework."**

Participant in the women's group, Montreal North

# Economic barriers

The high cost of certain SPAs and the equipment needed to practice them hinders access for these families.



**"It's very expensive for someone who lives like us in a minimum wage situation, we [can't] afford for our kids to play these sports."**

Participant in the men's group, Montreal North

**"It costs a fortune for two [children] and there are families with five [children] so they can't afford to pay for physical activities for all the kids."**

Participant in the women's group, Montreal North

# Facilitators to physical activity



# Facilitators

SPAs that are easily accessible are those that are affordable, close to home, allow families to spend time together, keep children occupied, break the isolation that sometimes accompanies immigration, and are offered or facilitated in environments already frequented by families (e.g., newcomer assistance centers, schools, libraries).

**"Sometimes you think it's hard to snowshoe in Montreal, but in fact in the library next door you can rent snowshoes."**

Participant in the men's group, Lachine and LaSalle

**"During spring break, we'd go to a pool in Rivière-des-Prairies because it's free swimming all day, we'd go and eat there, we'd spend all day, we'd have fun to pass the time. It's not just about staying at home."**

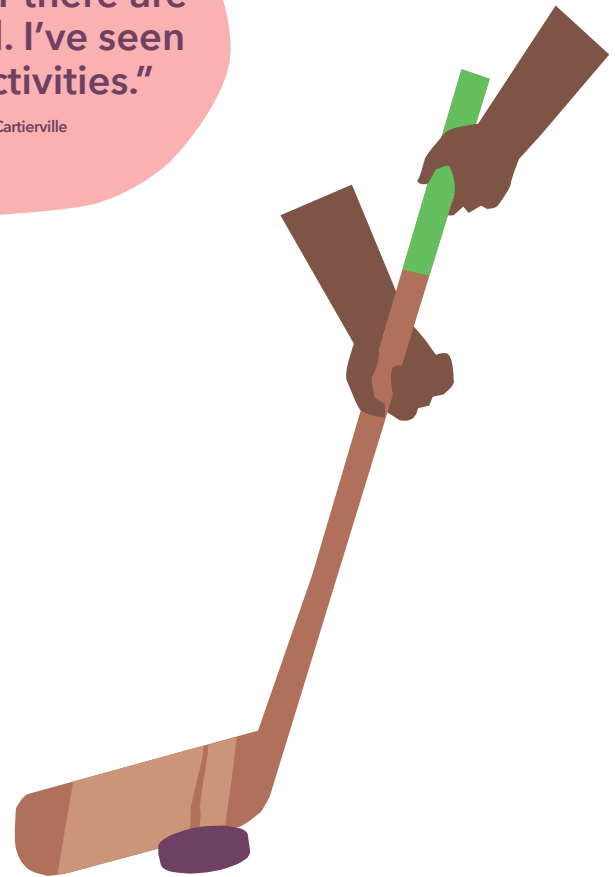
Participant in the women's group, Montreal North

**"Otherwise, they do all the school activities. In winter there are lots of activities at school. I've seen that it's more indoor activities."**

Testimonial, men's group, Saint-Michel, Ahuntsic-Cartierville

**"I did zumba classes because I like to move, I like to dance a bit, I like music too and it was an activity I can do with other ladies, and I can also bring my child with me."**

Participant in the women's group, Saint-Michel, Ahuntsic-Cartierville



# Possible solutions

The people we met raised a number of possible solutions for making SPA more inclusive for immigrant and/or racialized families:

- ① **Developing** an enhanced SPA service offering during the winter months, for example, by providing introductory and accompaniment for outdoor activities, and access to indoor spaces for free play and walking.
- ② **Improving** the range of activities and courses offered in neighborhoods. In particular, participants mentioned wanting to benefit from family activities, group activities for women and men, cycling workshops, activities that bring them closer to the local police, and activities with flexible schedules.
- ③ **Increasing** access to local swimming pools.
- ④ **Offering** activities according to a sliding scale for price, according to the income of participants.
- ⑤ **Making** neighborhoods safe to walk in during all seasons.
- ⑥ **Better promoting** activities and assistance available: The people we met said they wanted to be better informed about the range of activities on offer, existing financial assistance programs, and the facilities available in their neighbourhood. The communication channels mentioned for reaching families include schools, community centers, CLSCs, resource centers for new immigrants, and libraries.

# Glossary

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## 2SLGBTQ+

Acronym meaning lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer or questioning, intersex, asexual, aromantic or agender, and two-spirited (2 or 2S). The “+” sign refers to any other gender and sexual diversity community not mentioned in the initial letters.

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## ADHD

Attention deficit disorder with or without hyperactivity (ADHD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder. Symptoms may include difficulty paying attention, hyperactivity, and/or impulsivity.

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## Agender

A person who identifies as neither female nor male.

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## Carte proximité

Food voucher project that supports local food systems. The card is prepaid and can be used at select markets and retailers that are committed to sourcing local products.

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## Cisgender (cis woman or cis man)

A person whose gender identity corresponds to the sex and gender assigned at birth.

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## Dumpster diving

The practice of recovering edible food from the trash bins of grocery stores, convenience stores, and restaurants.

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## Eating disorders

Psychological disorders that negatively affect people’s relationship with food, which can include but is not limited to anorexia. In this research project, people mentioned a chronic lack of appetite due to psychological disturbances, as well as obsession with gaining or losing weight.

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## Equity

Equity refers to a fair and balanced distribution of resources (opportunities and benefits) that takes into account individual circumstances, needs and existing inequalities.

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## Food stamps

Prepaid food access cards. There are several food stamp programs in Montreal.

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## GBA+

Gender-based analysis and intersectionality (GBA+) is a process, a tool and a method of analysis and action. It aims to combat existing discrimination by taking into account the rights and realities of people who experience multiple forms of discrimination at the same time (intersectionality). GBA+ thus enables the development of more equitable projects, interventions and public policies.

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## Gender dysphoria

Refers to the discomfort, distress, or suffering experienced by some transsexuals as a result of feelings of inadequacy between their gender identity and their sex/gender assigned at birth.

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## Gender fluid

This term may be used by a person whose gender identity and gender expression are not static, and may fluctuate over time and/or circumstances.

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## Gender identity

The internal personal experience of his or her gender. This includes the feeling of being a woman, man, both, or neither, or somewhere else on the gender spectrum. Gender identity can fluctuate and change over time.

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## Healthy eating

Healthy eating refers to diets that are nutritious, varied, and minimally processed. The composition of a healthy diet varies according to individual needs and cultures. In this research project, we asked participants about their references to healthy eating before we explored the topic with them.

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## Immigrant and/or racialized families

In the context of this research, this term refers to people who are responsible for at least one minor and who identify with one or more of the following groups: Black, Asian, Latino, Arab, or other ethnic and/or racialized minorities not listed. This project considered both immigrants and non-immigrants, as well as people with different migration statuses.

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## Inclusion

Inclusion is about creating an environment where all people, regardless of their differences, are respected and have access to the same opportunities.

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## Intersectionality

Intersectionality is an analytical tool for better understanding social inequalities. This perspective rejects the idea that systems of discrimination, such as racism or sexism, can be understood in isolation and independently of each other. They are interconnected and interdependent, and affect people’s lives in complex ways depending on their context (historical and geographical).

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## Mutualisation

Collaborative actions to pool and share resources and tasks within a group.

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## Non-binary (person)

A person who does not or does not exclusively identify with either the female or male gender. Transgender people may or may not identify as non-binary.

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## Non-mixed groups

French term referring to the act of creating spaces reserved for a group of people experiencing oppression or discrimination, especially to share common experiences. It is a practice often used by 2SLGBTQ+, feminist and/or racialized groups. As part of this research, a specifically gender-neutral space was created for people who are non-binary, agender, or who feel uncomfortable participating in a group that includes people who identify exclusively as female or male.

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**Queer**

It encompasses all sexual orientations, gender expressions, and identities of the 2SLGBTQ+ community. In the past, the term was used as an insult to 2SLGBTQ+ people until it was re-appropriated by some of them.

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**Queer-friendly (or LGBTQ-friendly)**

Refers to spaces that are welcoming, safe and respectful of 2SLGBTQ+ people.

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**Racialized person**

A person who self-identifies as belonging to one of the groups that have been characterized as "other" and thus has undergone a process of racialization that fundamentally portrays the person as different. In this way, the term "racialized" emphasizes the socially constructed nature of difference. It emphasizes that race is neither objective nor biological, but a constructed idea that serves to represent, categorize, and exclude the "other".

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**Sociocultural**

Refers to a vast influence of societal and cultural issues that impact , customs, values, behaviors, traditions, of a human group or culture.

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**Sport and physical activity (SPA)**

Sport and physical activity refers to all forms of physical activity, whether recreational or competitive. It also includes active mobility, such as walking and cycling, and physical work, such as housework and construction.

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**Trans (or transgender)**

A person is trans or transgender when their sex assigned at birth does not match their gender identity. Trans people may identify as non-binary, female, male, or agender.

# Know How to Take Care +

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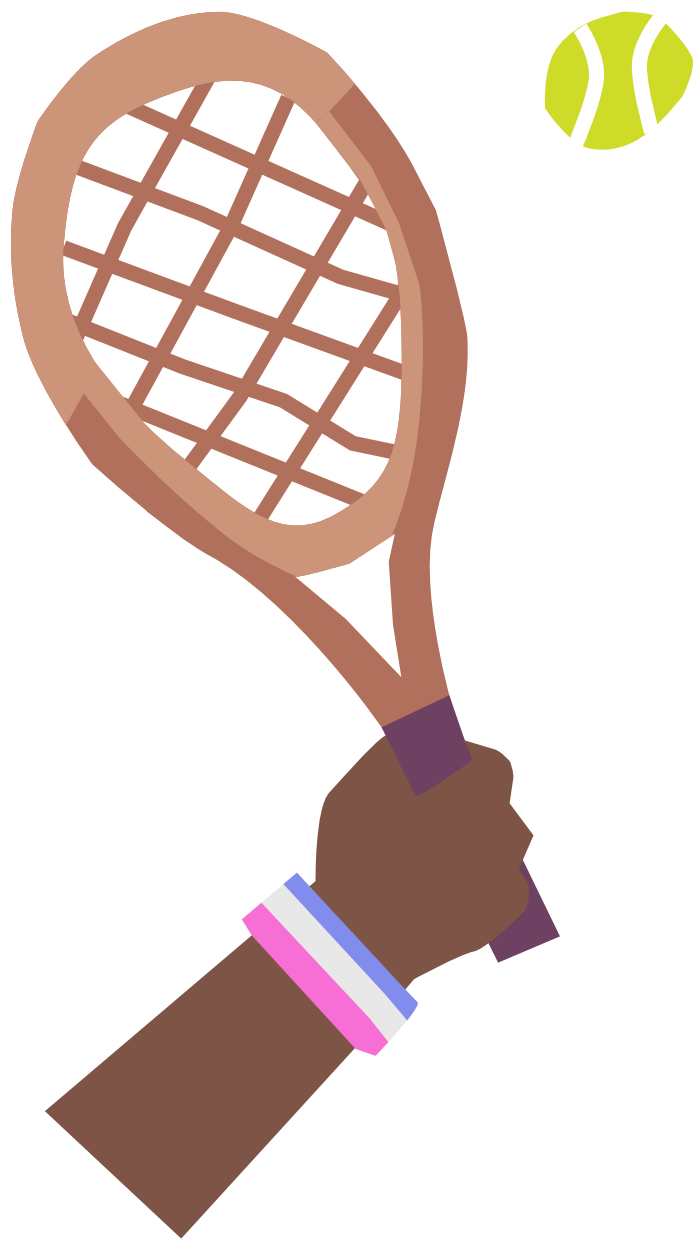
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## Graphics and Layout

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