



FAQ: Physical Activity Webinar

Q1: What about organized events to get you moving?

A1: These can be a great opportunity! Organized running or walking events are becoming more and more popular. These events often have first time attenders and those who have been coming for years! That can often make participating less stressful, because people of all ability levels are present. These events are often social as well. When attending, you definitely begin to recognize that there is a running and/or walking community. People encourage each other and really cheer for everyone's success. It doesn't matter if you're participating with someone you know, when you're a participant in one of these events, everyone is part of the same team.

These types of events can also be motivating for a few different reasons. For starters, there is a defined date. Having that date set gives individuals a concrete goal to work towards. Additionally, many of these events are associated with different causes: breast cancer walks, recovery walks, runs to beat cancer, etc. There may be a cause that holds meaning for an individual, which could then serve as even more motivation for participation.

Q2: What is the best way to get consumers to attempt to create a plan? My experience is that they just say I can, don't or do create one, but don't move toward their goal.

A2: Motivation is difficult! In part, the lack of motivation is a characteristic symptom of many mental health diagnoses. But a lack of motivation for physical activity isn't just something individuals with mental health conditions experience. This is something that many people who are physically inactive struggle with. Often, individuals assume that physical activity means exercise. It means working out at a gym, or possibly doing activities that they think will be difficult, painful, or not enjoyable.

The Transtheoretical Model of Change, often referred to as the Stages of Change, is one way to conceptualize motivation to change. I recommend looking at lesson 3 of the guide for peer support specialists (<http://tucollaborative.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Supporting-Physical-Activity-A-guide-for-peer-support-specialists.pdf>). This section talks about the different stages of change: precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, and maintenance. In addition to describing the sections, it also describes different strategies you might use to help someone to increase their readiness to change.

I also think it's important to create a climate for physical activity. Integrate physical activity assessments with everyone that you work with. Have signs that emphasize the physical and mental health benefits of physical activity. Be aware of the free physical activity resources in your community. Engage in physical activity yourself!

Q3: Are neighborhood service or clean-up-days good examples?

A3: Yes! This is great, out of the box, thinking! Neighborhoods and local parks often host clean up days. These are free to participate in and help individuals build stronger ties to the community. Volunteering with Habitat for Humanity, church clean up, community gardens, are great examples of activities that may be more meaningful for the individual than just exercising.

Q4: What are some examples of biometric devices that can be used? Pros? Cons?

A4: There are a number of electronic devices that can be used to help individuals track and monitor their physical activity. These can range from \$20-\$250 or more! I have used the FitBit and the Up! by Jawbone. There are some nice features that these have. They give you a good understanding of how intense your physical activity is and what times of the day you are more active. For some of them, you can set physical activity goals, and the device will vibrate or ding when you reach your goal. This can be used as encouragement or reinforcement of behavior.

As smart phones become more common, you might also explore fitness apps. Personally, I use Runtastic, but there are a number of apps out there and really it's personal preference and phone compatibility that you should consider.

The cost of these is often, however, prohibitive. Another concern I have with some of these devices is that they are very passive ways to monitor physical activity. Unless the individual is *checking* and *recording* the information from the device, it won't really be a beneficial tool.

Q5: What is the Temple University Collaborative doing in this area?

Right now, we have two research studies that promote engagement in community-based leisure and recreation activities. These interventions don't solely focus on exercise or high intensity physical activities, but they are activities that individuals more consistently engage in and occur within the community. Therefore, in order to participate, individuals have to engage in increased physical activity. I'm a strong believer that exercise is not the only answer, nor should it be. Individuals should aim for intentional physical activity, but also lead a more active lifestyle. Community-based recreation can include going to the gym, doing yoga in the park, etc... but being out and being active is an important step towards increasing physical activity.

In addition, we also offer training opportunities for mental health agencies who are interested in developing programs and strategies to support individuals to increase physical activity.

These were the main questions from the webinar. If you have other questions, please do not hesitate to contact us!