

Health Principles in Wellness Coaching

Topics to consider:

- **Give health advice only with permission**
- **Go slow with lifestyle changes**
- **Don't be the "medical expert"**
- **Use resources rather than verbal instructions**

Only with permission:

In the presentation of health principles as it relates to wellness coaching it is critical to understand that these principles are given only "with permission" that is to say as we maintain the principles of coaching which is to help the client discover his goals and actions rather than just telling them all that they should do. However when the opportunity presents itself and you see that good sound information on health principles would be valuable for their progress you may ask them. " Could I share a health principle that may help you with that problem you are working on?"

Go Slow:

And when you receive permission that is not a green light to start dumping on them everything that you may know on the subject nor to present all that they may need but to take them one step at a time and pick the steps with which you feel they can easily be successful.

That does not mean that you cant give them an overview or the big picture but that you will present it to them as a process to work toward and that small steps will be the best way to reach their ultimate goal.

Not a Medical Expert:

It is also important to avoid being the medical expert even if you are. This will help to avoid conflict with their health care provider and also to avoid liability issues. Most lifestyle concepts can be presented in a convening manner as a neighbor would share with a neighbor or "what do you think about this"

This would include the wording and terminology you use. Avoid using such terms as treatment, diet, hydrotherapy, vegan etc. instead use "what I do", food you eat, hot towels, plant foods, etc.

References vs Verbal Advice:

Instead of giving verbal advice it is best to give published references as articles or books. That way you are not responsible for accuracy and liability of the information given as the authors have already taken that risk for you. I recommend Health Power by doctors Diehl/Ludington as a simple and accurate resource for anyone needing lifestyle information and direction. Even then it would be a mistake for anyone to try to immediately follow every recommended practice in the book if it were new to them.

Key Health Principles

- **Balance**
- **Logic**
- **Restoration**
- **Disease Prevention**
- **Avoid Extremes**

Balance:

Balance is not only important but is also attractive to most people. An easy acronym to remember to teach balance is NEWSTART which stands for Nutrition, Exercise, Water, Sunlight, Temperance, Air, Rest and Trust in God. This does help to keep us balanced as too often we can get focused on one thing such as nutrition giving the impression that if that is in line it will fix everything.

Another Acronym for balance is CREATION as used in Creation Health. This may fit into a coaching model as the first principle is Choice, then, Rest, Environment, Activity, Trust, Intimacy, Outlook, and Nutrition. I like this because it begins with attitudes and relationships then saves nutrition to last which is the one that is often the main focus for lifestyle.

Logic:

When I present these principles I often hear people say “This makes more sense than anything I have ever heard”. I believe that truth about the natural laws that God has put into place will resonate with the heart of man. However it is important to take the time to see the logic in these principles and present them in their simplicity.

Restoration:

It is always amazing to me how the body is able to be restored to health and often very quickly when we stop the destructive behavior and begin following proper lifestyle practices. A good way to bring hope to people is to tell them stories of those we know that have seen reversal of disease, these dramatic changes are seldom seen through the normal practice of medicine but only through lifestyle approach. However it is very important to make it clear that every one and every situation is unique, so yes give hope but with that critical qualification. The determining factors may be age, how long they have had the illness, how closely they follow the correct principles and even their mental attitude and even if all things are followed perfectly there are no guarantees. We can always promise improved health but they may not see the degree of success in the area they are desiring.

Disease Prevention:

Everyone has a story of someone like a George Burns who violates every health principle and still lives a long life and in contrast they can point to someone who does everything right and dies from cancer at a young age. They therefore conclude that it doesn't make a difference so why try, you might as well enjoy life because you can't control the outcome.

I have discovered that people love to here good news about their bad habits. In other words if they read 10 research papers on the effects of chocolate on their health and 9 were negative and one was positive they would remember and quote the positive one because it supported what they wanted to do. So unless someone wants to know truth you will not make a lot of progress even with accurate information. That is why coaching is so effective the client develops their own plans and goals when they are ready.

There is very good evidence for prevention and reversal of such diseases as heart disease, diabetes, obesity, hypertension for almost everyone who applies the wellness principles. There is also good evidence for improvement and reduced risk for most everyone with cancer, arthritis, digestive disorders and neurologic conditions.

Extremes:

When you are involved in health work you will invariably be introduced to many remedies that are so successful that you are tempted to apply them to everything. They say that the sign of a fanatic is that no mater what topic that he starts on you can be sure of the topic he will end up on.

You will maintain a more solid reputation and success if you are careful to maintain a balance. That does not mean a mixture of truth and error but truth in balance.

In presenting a topic start with topics that have good solid research and are not too strange sounding rather than odd sounding ones even if true.

Good Web Sites Regarding Diabetes

http://www.pcrm.org/search/?query_string=Diabetes

<http://www.pcrm.org/health/prevmed/diabetes.html>

http://www.pcrm.org/health/diabetes/tour_highlights.html

<http://www.weimar.org/>

<http://www.drnedley.com/>

<http://drmcDougall.com/free.html>

Good Web Sites Regarding Heart Disease

www.heartattackproof.com