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Motivational Techniques to Promote Patient Exercise & Activity Nurse Talking Tip Sheet

This Nurse Tip Sheet was developed by AAHFN as resource in facilitating patient education. It provides additional information so that the Nurse can supplement patient teaching with the corresponding Patient Tip Sheet. A list of resources is provided for additional information.

Background: Motivational Interviewing Techniques

- Motivational interviewing is an evidence-based, patient-centered approach that promotes intrinsic self-motivating behavior change; this technique affirms patient strengths, successes, and potential
- Extrinsic motivational factors (promise of reward or threat of punishment) produce short-lived actions, while
- Intrinsic motivational factors (innate feelings of self-worth/accomplishment) produce longer-lasting behavioral changes

Nursing's Role:

- Collaboratively identifying the patient's intrinsic and extrinsic motivations
- Supporting the patient's identified goals for exercising/activity
- Stimulating self-motivational statements from the patient to enhance motivation for positive behavioral change
- Integrating Motivational Interviewing techniques with the Teach-Back method to facilitate patient engagement and accountability

Please refer to the *Teach Back Method Videos* on the AAHFN Website to reference the Exercise and Activity video:

http://www.aahfn.org/?page=TeachBack_Intro



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Intrinsic Motivation: Understanding a Patient's Readiness to Change

- Important to understand and consider the *stages of readiness* in order to customize interventions to an individual patient
 - Precontemplation- Patient is not concerned about his/her illness (Heart Failure) and is not considering change
 - Contemplation- Patient has considered changing his/her habits (increasing their activity) but has not yet taken steps to make this happen
 - Determination- Patient has decided to make a change in his/her habits (planning a daily exercise activity or signing up for a structured program)
 - Action- Patient is making a change in his/her habits (engaging in exercise 3-5 times a week)
 - Maintenance- Patient has effectively followed his/her exercise program and has seen positive effects as a result of his/her actions
 - Relapse- Patient returns to previous unhealthy habits

Interview Questions and Techniques to Elicit Information about Readiness to Change:

- How important is it for you right now to change your activity?
- If you decide to change your activity, how confident do you feel that you would succeed?
- You've decided to change your activity; you believe you can - how ready are you to do it *now*?

Elicit "Change Talk" - Statements by the Patient in the Direction of Positive Change:

- Ask the patient what concerns him/her about his/her current behavior and how this relates to his/her personal goals using the Acronym DARN-C:
 - **Desire** to change
 - **Ability** to change
 - **Reasons** to change
 - **Need** to change
 - **Commitment** to change
- Utilize a rating scale of 1-10 (0 = no concern; 10 = very concerned) to help identify the patient's concerns; the Nurse can then identify needed resources for the patient



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Positive Motivation/Benefits from Exercise and Physical Activity:

- Helps keep the heart strong
- Maintains weight and promotes weight loss
- Increases energy, stamina, and feelings of well-being
- Lowers cholesterol and maintains healthy blood pressure
- Improves circulation and aerobic exercise capacity
- Aerobic exercise *reverses* endothelial dysfunction, skeletal muscle wasting, ventilatory inefficiency

Encourage Patients to Get Moving & Keep Moving by Advising the Following:

- Wear supportive shoes and loose, comfortable clothing
- Set reasonable, achievable goals, for example 20 to 30 minutes of walking, two to three times a week
- Track progress by wearing a pedometer and journal steps/distance; seeing improvement encourages patients to keep going
- Find friends, family, co-workers, or neighbors, who will offer encouragement to stay on track
- Be most active when feeling well; exercise after resting, when not tired from other activities

Motivational Hints to Share with Patients:

- Plan daily activities ahead of time
- Pace activities throughout the day
- Perform activities that demand more energy when feeling good
- While adhering to fluid restrictions, drink water to stay hydrated
- Stretch before and after activities
- Rest before and after activities
- Walk in pairs or with a group

Maintain Safety Precautions

- As heart rate and breathing increase during exercise, patient should still be able to carry on a conversation while exercising – “walk and talk” at the same time
- Carry a mobile phone or let somebody know the walking route



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- Patient should not exercise if the weather is very hot or cold. In hot/humid weather, exercise in the morning or evening when it is cooler; in cold weather, cover nose and mouth with a scarf
- Wait one hour after meals before exercising
- Aerobic exercise and stretching are beneficial; however, avoid isometric exercises, such as pushing, pulling, lifting, and carrying
- Exercise lowers blood sugar levels for up to 48 hours; Diabetic HF patients will need to monitor blood sugar levels pre/post exercise to avoid a hypoglycemic episode

For Future Reference:

- Miller WR & Rollnick S. *Motivational interviewing: Preparing people to change*. 3rd ed. New York: Guilford Press, 2012.
- Prochaska JO, DiClemente CC, Norcross JC. In search of how people change. Applications to addictive behaviors. *Am Psychology*. 1992; 47:1102.
- Rollink S, Butler CC, Stott N. Helping smokers make decisions: The enhancement of brief intervention for general medical practice. *Patient Educ Couns*. 1997;31(3):191.