

# WELLNESS COACHING BOOSTER SESSION

Strengths  
Focus: Beyond  
Assessment

Materials presented are adapted from the Wellness Coaching Manual and PowerPoint presentations (Swarbrick, M., Nemec, P, & Spagnolo, A., 2014)

# STRENGTHS FOCUS: BEYOND ASSESSMENT

*By the end of the workshop participants will be able to:*

- 1. Explain how starting Wellness Coaching with a strengths assessment creates an atmosphere and relationship that builds hope and self-efficacy
- 2. Define the broad concept of “strengths focus”
- 3. Describe the use of affirmations in the Wellness Coaching flow

# GOAL SETTING

Goal setting comes after.....

**ASSESSMENT**, and

The assessment focuses on .....

**STRENGTHS AND NEEDS.**

# THINK ABOUT IT

Why is it so important to start with strengths??

What does talking about strengths do for a person??

How does it affect the coachee's self-efficacy??

# TALKING ABOUT STRENGTHS

- Helps build a relationship with the Coachee
- Provides information about her values
- Gives you clues about her abilities
- Can increase self-efficacy
  - A person's belief in herself as someone who can accomplish something
    - "I know I can do it!"

**Focus on what is STRONG,  
Not what's wrong!**

# HOW DO YOU BRING IN THE STRENGTHS FOCUS? TAKE YOUR TIME...

- Review and EXPLORE
  - Strengths in all 8 Dimensions
  - Strengths in the Physical Health Domain
  - Areas that seem most important
    - Possible areas to improve
    - Possible areas for change
  - What can get in the way

# HOW DO YOU LISTEN FOR STRENGTHS AND MOTIVATION?

- Listen for DARN-C
  - Desire
  - Ability
  - Reasons
  - Need
  - Commitment



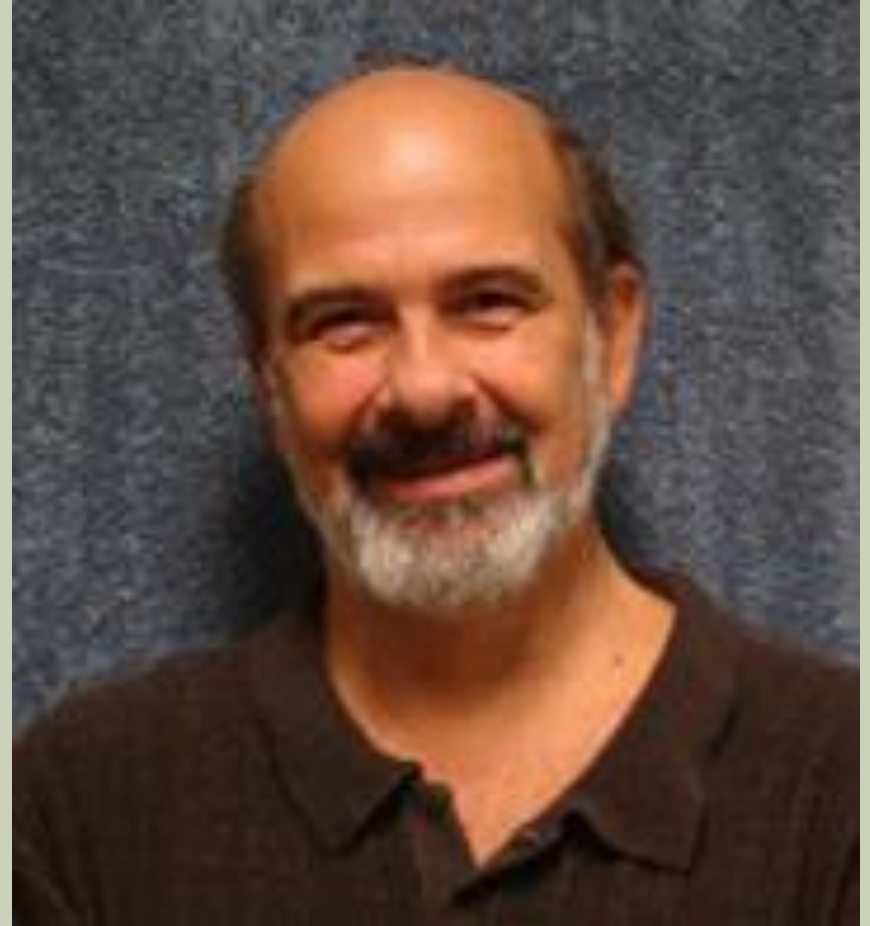
# CONTINUE FOCUSING ON STRENGTHS WHEN SETTING THE GOAL

- Review the Assessment
- Clarify any changes or new information
- Use effective communication skills
  - Open ended questions
  - Active listening
  - Reflective responses
- Remind yourself:

**THE GOAL BELONGS TO THE COACHEE**

# STRENGTHS ASSESSMENT

- “The strengths assessment process often begins the process of building a more complete picture of the person. Experience with strengths assessment suggests that in recounting and remembering...interests have been re-stimulated, past successes long forgotten and relived, and ultimately the self perception of the life history has shifted”. (Rapp, 2006)



# 4 FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS OF THE STRENGTHS MODEL: APPLICATION TO COACHING

- The coach enters into a dynamic relationship based on the coachee's needs, goals, and aspirations.
- Coaches are trained to see the strengths and skills rather than liabilities and deficits.
- All steps, no matter how small, that lead towards a selected goal are themselves goals that are to be reinforced upon their accomplishments.
- The coachee selects their own goals and targets.
  - The coach supports and sustains the coachee in the process of securing the needed resources.

# COACHING LANGUAGE

- **Using Affirmations to Encourage and Sustain Change & Motivation**
  - Similar to the strengths language
  - Similar to reflecting back change talk
  - Applied in each stage of the coaching flow

# WHAT IS AN AFFIRMATION?

- Sentence aimed to affect the conscious and the subconscious mind.
- Bring up related mental images into the mind, which could inspire, energize and motivate.
- Repeating affirmations, and the resultant mental images, affect the subconscious mind,
  - influences the behavior, habits, actions and reactions.

Rollnick, S. & Miller, W. (2007), *Motivational Interviewing in Health Care: Helping Patients Change Behavior*. Guilford Press.

# HOW CAN A COACH USE AFFIRMATIONS

- **During the Strengths Assessment**
  - Not always natural to talk about strengths
  - Coach can reflect on information gained and reinforce positive behaviors used in the past
- **During the Goal setting process**
  - People need encouragement and reminders that they are embarking on a difficult process
  - Affirmations can help the coach to acknowledge the effort and intensity change behaviors require
- **During Mentoring and Support**
  - To celebrate small successes
  - To encourage the coachee to stay motivated

# EXAMPLES OF AFFIRMATIONS

- “Your commitment really shows by [insert a reflection about what the client is doing]...”
- “You showed a lot of [insert what best describes the client’s behavior..... strength, courage, determination] by doing that.”
- “It’s clear that you’re really trying to change your [insert risky/problem behavior].”
- “By the way you handled that situation, you showed a lot of [insert what best describes the client’s’ behavior..... strength, courage, determination].”

# EXAMPLES OF AFFIRMATIONS

- “You handled yourself really well in that situation.”
- “That’s a good suggestion.”
- “Congratulations on successfully completing…….”
- “If I were in your shoes, I don’t know if I could have managed nearly so well.”



# SOME TIPS ON USING AFFIRMATIONS IN THE COACHING PROCESS

- Focus on specific behaviors
- Avoid using the word “I”
  - Why????
- Focus on descriptions and not evaluations
- Attend to non problems areas instead of problem areas
- Think of attributions as attributing interesting qualities

Rosengren, D. (2012). Building Motivational Interviewing Skills: A Practitioner Workbook. Guilford Press.

# SUSAN

- Susan has decided with your help that she would like to work on making changes to her diet and nutrition. Susan has Type II diabetes and would like to better control that condition with dietary changes in conjunction with her prescribed medication. Susan reported during the assessment that she could easily consumer a 2 liter bottle of soda and 3 to 4 glasses of sweet tea per day. Susan also noted that she barely drank any water on any day of the week except when taking her meds two times a day.
- After the assessment and goal setting processes, she identified the following step to work on
  - “I will drink 8-10 glasses of water per day for the next 7 days”.

# DEVELOPING AN AFFIRMATION STATEMENT

## ■ Mentoring and Support:

- When you meet with Susan at the seven day check in, she shares her food/drink diary with you. Susan had successfully eliminated the majority of sugary drinks from her diet the past week and consumed 8 glasses of water on four of the seven days during the past week.
  - Susan shared that she attended a family reunion cook out over the weekend and “fell off the soda wagon”. She also noted that on Saturday and Sunday, she had fried foods and cake at the reunion.
  - Susan stated, “I really botched things up over the weekend”.
- 
- Develop an affirmation statement that acknowledges her success the past week and focuses on her strengths.

# REFERENCES

- Rollnick, S. & Miller, W. (2007), **Motivational Interviewing in Health Care: Helping Patients Change Behavior**. Guilford Press.
- Rapp, C. & Goscha, R. 2006. **The Strengths Model: Case Management with People with Psychiatric Disabilities**, Oxford University Press.
- Rosengren, D. (2012). **Building Motivational Interviewing Skills: A Practitioner Workbook**. Guilford Press.
- Swarbrick, M. (2014). **Wellness Coaching Training Manual**. CSPNJ & Rutgers University.