MAINTAINING YOUR MOTIVATION

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- Assessment
- Referral
- Counseling
- Crisis Intervention
- Work/life services
- Management Consultation
- Workplace Training

GOALS

- examine why it can be hard to maintain positive changes
- explore strategies to avoid common pitfalls
- learn how to use mindfulness and positive psychology to keep us on track with our personal lifestyle goals.
MOTIVATION

Definitions:
• "the reason or reasons one has for acting or behaving in a particular way."
• "the general desire or willingness of someone to do something."

Inducement or incentives may be part of the motivation. Those may be positive or negative.

BARRIERS TO MAINTAINING YOUR MOTIVATION

Maintaining motivation towards our goals is the often the most challenging part of any behavior change.

Common barriers include the following:
• It’s easy for boredom to set in.
• Not revisiting/revising your goals.
• Unexpected setbacks.
• Losing sight that we are in it for the long haul.
• The challenge of staying positive.

TIPS FOR MAINTAINING YOUR MOTIVATION: VARIETY

• Add some variety to your routine.
• Fitness:
  – Mix up your exercise routine with new activities.
  – If you exercise alone, find a buddy, join an exercise group, sports league, yoga, dance or tai chi class.
  – In warmer weather find a hiking trail at a local park or nature reserve.
• Weight management:
  – Try new foods, explore different groceries, farmer’s markets
  – Search for new recipes on-line or cookbooks at the bookstore
• Both:
  – Change or alternate your rewards when you reach your goals
TIPS FOR MAINTAINING YOUR MOTIVATION:
REVISITING/REVISING YOUR GOALS

• Go back to your initial goals. What was your purpose of starting a program?
• Are they my goals or someone else’s?
• We all have motivating factors – Health, Fitness, Family, Friends, etc.
• If you didn’t write it down before, do so now.
  – Committing it to print makes it more real.

TIPS FOR MAINTAINING YOUR MOTIVATION:
REVISITING/REVISING YOUR GOALS

• When writing your goals, know your motivation.
• Place it where you can see it every day, perhaps multiple places and places where it is impossible to notice it.

TIPS FOR MAINTAINING YOUR MOTIVATION:
REVISITING/REVISING YOUR GOALS

• Keep your goals small, realistic and attainable but challenge yourself
• Setting unrealistic or unattainable goals will cause you to lose interest or experience failure and disappointment.
• Too easy? You’ll quickly lose interest.
• Instead, challenge yourself by increasing your goals incrementally and reward yourself for attaining your goal each step of the way.
TIPS FOR MAINTAINING YOUR MOTIVATION: REVISITING/REVISING YOUR GOALS

Another option: Set SMART Goals

- **Specific** – What do you want to achieve?
- **Meaningful** – Why is this goal important to you?
- **Action Oriented** – What steps do you need to take to achieve it?
- **Realistic** – How do you know that you can achieve this goal?
- **Time-Bound** – By when do you want to achieve this goal?

TIPS FOR MAINTAINING YOUR MOTIVATION: EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

- Expect and prepare yourself for the unexpected including disruptions and setbacks.
- Remind yourself that no matter how many mistakes you make you are still ahead of where you started.
- Practice mindfulness
- Manage your stress –
  - Challenge your negative thoughts.  
    “The greatest weapon against stress is our ability to choose one thought over another.”  
    William James

MAINTAINING YOUR MOTIVATION: ADDRESSING BARRIERS

I don’t exercise because:
- On one side of an index card:
  - List Barriers
    - “I don’t have time.”
    - “It costs too much.”
    - “I can’t make this change alone.”

I could begin to exercise if I can:
- On the flip side:
  - List Possible Solutions
    - “Fit it in when you can. Walk steps instead of elevator. Walk during lunch once a week”
    - “Find a school track, local park or mall to go walking.”
    - “Start a walking group at the office.”
TIPS FOR MAINTAINING YOUR MOTIVATION: STAYING FOCUSED

- Remind yourself: This a marathon, not a sprint
- Keep that new dress or old pair of jeans as a reminder of your goal
- Log your progress so you see how far you have come. Pick a set day and time to log such things as weight for greater reliability.
- Think of being active or eating healthy. Don’t just plan your workouts or meals.
  - Choose stairs over elevator.
  - Park at the far end of the parking lot.
  - Keep healthy snacks at work.

TIPS FOR MAINTAINING YOUR MOTIVATION: STAYING FOCUSED

- Practicing Mindfulness
  - the ability to stop and think about what you are experiencing at any given moment.
  - Try yoga and mindfulness meditation
  - Physical exercise can be an opportunity to unclutter our brains from all the other thoughts that preoccupy us throughout the day.

TIPS FOR MAINTAINING YOUR MOTIVATION: STAYING FOCUSED

Mindfulness incorporated into our eating behaviors

- Examples of mindful eating:
  - The planning stage in controlling ingredients and portion size
  - The practice of eating more deliberately
  - Eating without the distraction of print or electronic media
  - Slowing down the process to savor the eating experience.
- Become aware of what and how you are eating slows down the process and helps us to appreciate the experience in the moment.
TIPS FOR MAINTAINING YOUR MOTIVATION: REMAINING POSITIVE

The only bad workout is the one that didn’t happen

“Whether you think you can, or think you can’t — you’re right.” Henry Ford

• Positive Psychology: knowing what is best about ourselves and how we using that knowledge to build our best lives.
• Think positive reinforcement (what can I gain)… – it will get you further than fear or guilt.
• Practice gratefulness by subtraction. – “What would my life be like without exercising or without a healthier diet?”
• Recognize and try to avoid the triggers or cues that lead to missteps.
• Recognize the benefit of having positive people on your side.

USING TECHNOLOGY TO STAY MOTIVATED

• You can set up automatic reminders to keep on track with your goals
• Use a fitness Mobile App for tracking and/or coaching.
• Fitbit or other wearable tracking devices
• On-line forums can serve as a support system. These can be postings or formal group meetings.
FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH SUCCESSFUL CHANGE

- Change is self-motivated
- The change is rooted in positive thinking vs. guilt or fear
- The goals are specific and limited to a few at a time
- Development of a practical, realistic plan for accomplishing your goals
- Spending time with others who are a positive influence for the change you are trying to make

YOUR NEXT STEPS

- List the advantages...
- Write down what will happen if you don't make the desired change(s)...
- What are some obstacles I have encountered...
- What steps can I take to counter those obstacles...
- Choose an accountability partner...
- Develop your tracking system...
- Decide on rewards (type, frequency, etc.)...

BY MAKING MOTIVATION WORK FOR US, WE CAN BETTER REACH FOR OUR GOALS.