

Transplant Wellness Behaviour Change Support

Adapting to Change – Addressing Barriers, Determining What You Can Control, Finding Your Motivation

This behaviour change session focus on strategies for adapting to changes. With a focus on identifying your barriers and determining ‘what you can control’, you can use movement or exercise to build your confidence, enhance your well-being, and support your overall quality of life.

“Change starts with just one step...then another.”

It is common to encounter surprises on the way to achieving a behavior change goal. Even the most well-thought-out plans may require some adjustments. By giving yourself room to take risks, make mistakes, and apply new knowledge, you’ll be able to take challenges in stride and work towards your goals.

Anticipate Obstacles

Occasional setbacks occur no matter how carefully you’ve constructed your movement plan. Preparing for potential obstacles is an important step to overcoming them. Try listing strategies for dealing with challenges to building your movement or exercise habit. If you skip a day or are having difficulty reaching your goals, take time to determine how best to get back on track.

Monitor Your Progress

When you first start making changes, you may progress rapidly, noticing significant impact from engaging in some daily movement, and building up to what your habit of regular exercise looks like. This may then start to “level off”, which is normal as your body adjusts to moving more. Continue to monitor your progress and reflect on how much you’ve achieved and how far you’ve come.

Reward Yourself

Be patient; it will take some time before your movement habits feel natural. Be your own cheerleader, supportive and encouraging, focusing on your achievements rather than your setbacks. Give yourself the recognition you deserve.

Visualize Success

Creating an image of success in your mind can be a powerful motivator, increase your self-confidence, and foster your commitment. Take a quiet moment to close your eyes and see yourself moving more, engaging in simply moving more, or building your exercise routine through the Transplant Wellness Program.

PLANNING AHEAD to MAINTAIN YOUR EXERCISE HABIT

*“Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising up every time we fail.”
– Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Missing your exercise sessions, not getting in as much physical activity as you planned, and moving less (not more!) are often realities. Acknowledging it will happen is important – it allows you to create strategies to deal with it to ensure you continue to **move more**. Recognize that some days your body needs less movement than others. Use stretching and breath work on days when you really feel tired, and walking or light movement when you have a bit more energy, and your exercise sessions when you have the time and energy.

Some of the most common barriers to *moving more*, or *building an exercise habit* are:

Lack of Time

- If you can't afford large chunks of time, aim for short bouts of activity spaced comfortably throughout your day. The evidence is in – move more, as every minute counts! Even 5-minute bouts of movement provide benefits...and you can add those bouts up over your day.

Lack of Wanting to Do Exercise

- The **real** secret is to find activities you **enjoy**. Do this, and you **won't** have to coax yourself to be active. Enjoyment = motivation to move more! Sometimes your motivation may lie “outside” of the actual exercise – like seeing the friendly faces (remote or in-person) in your exercise program, or feeling supported by the group leader. Tap into other reasons for wanting to be there if that helps to build your motivation.

Lack of an Exercise Partner

- Harness the social support that we know is so important for helping you “stick to an exercise habit”. Outside of structured exercise class – walk with a friend, do a class with a friend, or socialize before or after your movement. Keep it fun by keeping it social!

Learning How to Exercise

- Exercise must be tailored to you - and that's the best part about exercise – any movement can be adjusted so it feels good for you! In the Transplant Wellness Program, you will receive personalized feedback, be supported with additional online or in-person resources, and will be encouraged to build your movement plan to make it **what works for you!**

Other potential barriers: You may have other barriers, specific to your situation, that may vary during your transplant journey, or due to other health issues. It is important to discuss these barriers that may prevent you from ultimately reaching your physical activity goals.

Planning ahead for the ‘tough’ times may help you to stay active. Think about the following questions to help develop strategies to deal with potential barriers:

Have you ever had trouble maintaining an exercise program that you have previously started? If so, why?

If you have had difficulty previously, have certain behaviours or actions helped you to get back on track (i.e., joining a class, support from friends, setting goals)?

What barriers do you anticipate will make it tough to keep up your physical activity routine over the next few weeks? How about over the next month or two? How will you handle these situations to increase your chances of being successful?

What will help you get started again if you do have a break?

Add any other thoughts on your barriers to maintaining regular physical activity or exercise here, along with how you will handle such barriers:

MAINTAINING MOTIVATION AND PERSONAL CONTROL

“When you feel like quitting, remember why you started.”

Motivation is an important component of continued physical activity or exercise participation. Stay motivated by increasing your awareness of your motivators to **‘move more’**.

Research shows that the greatest sources of motivation are in doing something for:

- Fun, enjoyment, stimulation
- A feeling of accomplishment
- The pleasure of learning or mastering skills
- A benefit such as sleeping better, feeling calmer, building up your fitness

Pursue an activity you enjoy. For a feeling of accomplishment, pursue an activity you know you can do. When you succeed, you feel confident, in control, and your motivation increases.

How do you motivate yourself to be active?

What is NOT motivating for you in terms of physical activity?

In the past, how have you motivated yourself to exercise when you really didn't feel like it?

What health benefits motivate you to be active? Examples include: feeling better, having more energy, managing stress, managing pain, feeling healthier, having more confidence, managing your body composition (building muscles, managing weight), feeling strong, looking better, sleeping better, having fun, connecting with others...

ADJUSTING TO CHANGES

Your transplant journey may impact your sense of control – often everything seems to be changing around you. These changes are often accompanied by feelings of stress, anxiety, and other emotions, as well as a reduction in engaging in healthy behaviours. It is important to remember what's in your control, and what's not, and then be able to focus on those things that ARE within your control.

Think about

What's NOT in your control....

What's IN your control...

Strategies to help with changes...

- 1) Communicate
With your family, friends, healthcare team, your Transplant Wellness Program team, other movement or exercise supports
- 2) Tap Into Resources
Your Wellness Manual and other Transplant Wellness Program resources
- 3) Practice Self-Compassion
See our self-compassion handout and resources

CONTROL

“You cannot control what happens to you, but you can control your attitude toward what happens to you, and in that, you will be mastering change rather than allowing it to master you.” – Brian Tracy

Control plays an important role in our health outcomes. Although many factors in our lives are beyond our control, our reactions are decidedly our own. Believing and acting on what you are in control of in your own life may motivate you to build the habit of moving more.

EXERCISE YOUR WAY TO SELF-ESTEEM

Self-esteem, the view we have of our own worth, is of paramount importance to our well-being. The key to self-esteem is developing self-acceptance and feelings of competence.

To develop self-acceptance:

- Learn to accept your physical build and ability
- Focus on mastering a physical task or skill instead of comparing yourself with others

To develop feelings of competence:

- Set a simple, achievable goal for a physical activity of your choice
- Determine when you will find the time to accomplish your goal
- Have a second plan in case something happens
- Enjoy the feelings of accomplishment and competence you get as you pursue and achieve your goals

USE MOVING MORE – WHATEVER THIS LOOKS LIKE FOR YOU – TO FEEL GREAT ABOUT YOURSELF, IN CONTROL, AND COMMITTED TO WELLNESS.

