

Health and wellness coaching: an important and powerful component of lipedema care

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Health and wellness coaching improves patient health related quality of life: produces positive, long-lasting behavioral change and prevents and mitigates chronic disease through lifestyle modification

EVIDENCE-BASED

- Based on respected theories and models such as
 - Sense of Coherence (Antonovsky)
 - Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura)
 - Hierarchy of Needs/Self-Actualization (Maslow)
 - Values in Action (VIA) Character Strengths and Virtues (Peterson & Seligman)
 - Transtheoretical Model (Prochaska and Prochaska)
 - Humanistic Theory (Rogers)
 - Motivational Interviewing (Rollins and Miller)
 - Nonviolent Communication (Rosenberg)
 - Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci)
 - Positive Psychology (Seligman)
 - Eight Dimensions of Wellness (Swarbrick)
 - Health and Wellness Continuum (Travis)
- Uses scientifically-validated methods, tools, and skills such as
 - Relaxation
 - Mindfulness
 - SMART goals
 - Stress reduction
- Incorporates principles of traditional, functional, and integrated medicine

AN HONORABLE, ETHICAL PROFESSION

- Governed by
 - Codes of ethics and professionalism
 - Relevant laws and regulations, such as those protecting patient privacy and confidentiality
- Board certification (NBME + National Board for Health and Wellness Coaching) guarantees advanced level of education, training, experience, and proficiency
 - Strong emphasis on continuing education
- Avoids conflicts of interest
- Remains within scope of practice and maintains professional boundaries
- Honors diversity and practices cultural sensitivity

COACHES GUIDE CLIENTS ON THEIR JOURNEY

- Confronting and overcoming psychosocial aspects
 - Body image/perception
 - Socially stigmatized due to visible and invisible symptoms
 - Lack of control over unreliable/burdensome/dysfunctional body
 - Low self-esteem, stress, anxiety, and depression decrease self-efficacy
 - Negative emotions such as frustration, helplessness, self-blame, guilt, shame
 - Fat shaming, especially including character assassination, may lead to eating disorders
 - Reduced ability to participate in social activities leads to social avoidance, loneliness, and social isolation
 - Reduced physical functioning limits activities of daily living, employment and academic opportunities and performance
- Finding their own best way to incorporate prescribed or recommended lifestyle changes

CLIENT-CENTERED COLLABORATION

- Client
 - Sets session agendas
 - Establishes values-based priorities leading to desired outcomes
 - Selects long-term goals and short-term action steps
 - Determines long-term health and wellbeing vision and purpose
- Coach
 - Does not diagnose, treat, or prescribe -- not an authority figure, instructor, or problem-solver
 - Honors client autonomy, decision to participate in coaching, and choice of coach
 - Conveys belief that client is resourceful and expert on their own experience
 - Empowers client to self-discover personal and meaningful values, resources, and strategies
 - Shows respect for client by
 - Observing and referring to client's beliefs and values
 - Asking permission to share information or experiences
 - Communicating confidence in client's ability to learn, grow, and change
 - Respecting client's preferences for learning and maintaining accountability, adjusted for health literacy
 - Displays compassion and demonstrates empathy to foster engagement and rapport
 - Recognizes that behavioral change is not easy
 - Creates nonjudgmental environment of unconditional acceptance and positive regard
 - Encouraging client to foster self-compassion and acceptance of emotions

CONVERSATIONS FACILITATE INTERNALLY-MOTIVATED PATIENT COMPLIANCE

- Coach listens actively, without assumptions
- Asks open-ended questions to expand conversation
- Uses reflections to
 - Give client powerful opportunity to hear their own words, perspectives, and beliefs
 - Raise client awareness of discrepancy or resistance
- Affirms client self-efficacy and communicates appreciation of client's work
 - Evokes deeper thinking and reflection
 - Encourages exploration
 - Highlights strengths, values, competence, and opportunities for learning

HELPING CLIENTS REGAIN CONTROL OF THEIR LIVES

- Focuses and refocuses conversations to balance exploratory thinking with action-oriented focus
- Promotes client growth, and bolsters self-confidence and self-efficacy, by helping client recall past successes, reframe, and learn from past failures
- Calls attention to positive shifts in client's energy or emotion to support healthy behavior change
- Helps client navigate decisional balance process when making the decision to change and choosing the action plan that best fits that client
- Assists in development of sustainable pathways forward and/or maintenance/relapse prevention plan

Including health and wellness coaches in the health care team contributes to superior lipedema patient outcomes

EMPOWERS PATIENTS TO MAKE THEIR OWN BEST CHOICES, SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENTING NEW BEHAVIORS PRESCRIBED OR RECOMMENDED BY HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

- Accepting/taking ownership of lipedema diagnosis
- Instituting prescribed and recommended lifestyle changes to minimize (or reverse) health effects, including disease progression
- Fostering self-compassion, encouraging honest self-appraisal of one's behavior plus improved self-care
- Enjoying a more positive attitude and higher quality of life – flourishing!

LIPDEMA PATIENTS BENEFIT WHEN THEY HAVE A VOICE, AND PERCEIVE THAT THEY ARE BEING HEARD AND BELIEVED

- Higher health-related quality of life
- Less inflammation with reduced anxiety and stress
- Improved body image/acceptance of appearance leads to
 - Enhanced self-care
 - Increased self-confidence
 - More/healthier social interactions

HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS BENEFIT WHEN LIPDEMA PATIENTS WORK WITH HEALTH AND WELLNESS COACHES

- Better patient outcomes
- Enhanced communication with patients
 - Effective use of time during office visits, focusing on clinical issues
 - More constructive relationships with patients, including those previously labeled "difficult"
- Increased confidence in patient self-management

Health and wellness are multidimensional and multidisciplinary

Health and wellness coaching contributes to superior lipedema patient outcomes, helping them to flourish!

Including health and wellness coaches in the health care team helps clinicians and therapists use their time and resources more effectively

