

Sessions Recap

This handout summarizes all the topics we covered throughout the PeakHealth Wellness program.

Refer back to this sheet to see how far we've come and think about any remaining questions you may have.

SESSION 1

Program Kickoff and Introduction to Self-Management

Top Secret Exercise

We discussed the meaning of self-disclosure, recognized the needs of everyone in the room, and discussed the importance of confidentiality

Ground Rules Exercise

Together, we set expectations for interacting with each other in order to create an environment where everyone felt comfortable expressing their opinions and sharing their experiences

Self-Management Exercise

We discussed the value and importance of self-management in regards to our health and keeping our chronic conditions under control

Value Sort

Through this activity, we uncovered the things we value the most in our work, relationships and daily lives

SESSION 2

Healthy Eating

Parts of a Healthy Diet

Together we discussed the importance of eating healthy, including:

- Eating a variety of fruits and vegetables - Aim for 5-7 /day.
- Choosing low-fat or nonfat dairy products - aim for 2-3/day
- Choosing lean protein (like chicken or turkey cooked without the skin, tuna canned in water, or black beans)
- Choosing whole grains (like whole wheat bread/pasta and brown rice)
- Choosing small portions
- Having variety in your diet and enjoying the foods you choose

Reading Food Labels

We learned how to interpret the important parts of food labels, including:

- Serving size
- Calories
- Limiting food with high sodium, fat and cholesterol
- Eating foods with more potassium, vitamins and daily fiber

Hunger Scale

We learned about the hunger scale and how it can help us be mindful about when and how much we eat

Who is My Care Team?

We identified our individual care teams within PeakHealth?
(eg. Care Coordinator, Social Worker, Doctor)

Healthy Cooking

We learned strategies for lightening up our favorite recipes by substituting foods high in fat and salt with lighter versions! (Ex. Instead of deep frying, baking in the oven)

Getting Off the Ground

We shared universal concerns about the group experience and discussed how to incorporate individual needs into the group process

SESSION 3

Managing Negative Emotions

Jigsaw Puzzle Exercise

We evaluated everyone's role in the group process and began to understanding group dynamics

About Negative Emotions

We learned: "A negative emotion is defined as an unpleasant or unhappy emotion which is evoked in individuals to express a negative effect towards an event or person."

Emotions affect the quality of our relationships, the work we do, our longevity and our overall health.

Accepting negative emotions, in yourself and other allows you to build better compassion for how they might present themselves and why. Accepting that they are a natural part of who you are will allow you to change how you might respond to them and you can begin to develop behaviors that are meaningful.

Strategies

We learned some tips that can help us manage, process, and embrace our negative emotions, including:

- **Tears of Hope**

Teach and learn (listen to what your body is trying to teach you and learn what they mean)

Express and enable (explore these emotions with openness and curiosity)

Accept and befriend (focus on increasing your acceptance with positive affirmations to bring your negative emotions into a space of acceptance)

Re-appraise and re-frame (reframe the situation and how you react)

Social support (everyone experiences negative emotions therefore it's important to have compassion and empathy for those around us)

Hedonic well-being and happiness (group your positive experiences with negative)

Observe and attend (observe your reactions without ignoring them and deal with them without judgment)

Physiology and behavioral changes (focus on your breath and heart rate changes when you experience negative emotions and work on these changes without judgement)

Eudaimonia (have a good spirit)

- **Envision your best possible self**
- **Practice gratitude**

SESSION 4

Exercise and Sleep

Sleep Benefits

Together we discussed the benefits of a good night's sleep, including:

- Getting sick less often
- Staying at a healthy weight
- Reducing stress and improving our mood
- Thinking more clearly and doing better in school/work
- Getting along better with people
- Making good decisions and avoiding injuries – for example, sleepy drivers cause thousands of car accidents every year

Good Sleep Hygiene

We shared some tips and strategies for getting good sleep, including:

- Having a relaxing routine
 - Warm bath/shower
 - Quiet activities
 - Lowering lights
 - Making sure your bedroom is not too hot or too cold
- Limiting stimulating behaviors before bedtime
 - Limiting caffeine after 2 pm
 - Limiting alcohol after dinner
 - Limiting large or spicy meals
 - Limiting vigorous exercise 4-6 hours before bed
 - Turning off all electronic devices at least 30 minutes before bed

- De-stressing and practicing relaxation techniques
 - Meditation
- Maintaining a regular physical activity routine
 - Physical activity helps with stress and sleep quality
- Not going to bed hungry
 - Having a light snack like almonds, turkey, chamomile tea, kiwi, or walnuts
- Go to bed the same time every night
 - Adults 18+ should get between 7-9 hours of sleep!

Exercise Benefits

Together we discussed the benefits of physical activity, including:

- Helping get to a healthy weight and staying there
- Building and keeping strong bones, muscles, and joints
- Giving you more energy
- Improving the quality of your sleep!
- Lowering your risk of chronic conditions and helping your body to better manage those conditions if you already have them.

Types of Exercise

We learned the difference between:

- **Lifestyle activities** — activities that get your body moving such as gardening, walking the dog, raking leaves, and taking the stairs instead of the elevator
- **Structured exercise** — a form of physical activity that is specifically planned, structured, and repetitive, such as weight training, tai chi, or an aerobics class

Adults (19-64) should aim for at least 150 minutes of heart pumping activity per week! Get medical clearance from your doctor before starting an exercise program!

SESSION 5

Social Support

About Social Support

We learned that having people in our community to support us as we try and change our habits and manage our condition can increase our chances of success both with making changes and keeping them!

There are 3 types of social support:

- **Emotional** – This type of support can be verbal expressions of empathy, understanding, trust, love, acceptance, encouragement or listening
- **Instrumental** – This type of support can be tangible aid or service such as financial assistance, material goods or services
- **Informational** – This type of support can be giving advice, suggestions, guidance or other useful information

Social Support Jenga Game

Together we played a game to highlight the various types of social support and practice identifying our needs and asking for them. We practiced managing our actions when dealing with both negative and positive support.

SESSION 6

Medications

Medication Adherence

We learned that medication adherence is taking medications as they are prescribed by your doctor, and making sure you take your medication in the **right doses**, the **right way** at the **right time**!

If you are having trouble remembering to take your medication, you can:

- Try using a medication list, pill organizer, medication dispenser or alarm
- Try taking medications during or right after other routine daily events
- Ask your caregiver or friend to help you

If you don't fully understand the doctor's direction, you can:

- Ask the pharmacist right away about the directions, keep asking questions until you understand
- Re-write the directions so they make sense to you

If you can't travel to the pharmacy, you can:

- Use mail order pharmacy and delivery services
- Ask a friend or family member to pickup and deliver your medications

If you cannot afford to pay for your medications, you can:

- Ask for a medication review to identify less expensive medications
- Apply for Medicaid or pharmaceutical assistance programs

If you cannot see or open the bottle, you can:

- Ask for easy open caps, bigger vials
- Use a pill organizer or dispenser
- Get labels printed or written larger/use a magnifying glass

Remember to bring a list of all your medicines to every health visit!

SESSION 7

Managing Stress

Handling Stress

We learned that stress is how the brain and body respond to a demand. It's important for us to recognize stress when it happens and pay attention to how we deal with these stressful events so we can make sure we're dealing with stress in a healthy way.

There are tips for handling stress when it arises, such as:

- Replacing negative thoughts (I can't; it's impossible) with positive thoughts (I can! I'm worth it)
- Keeping things in perspective
- Spending time with people who make you laugh, or listen to a funny radio program
- In a stressful moment, taking a 10-minute break to be by yourself to collect your thoughts
- Trying a relaxation technique like meditation, prayer or yoga
- Breathing in and out slowly and deeply from your belly
- When we are stressed, our muscles usually get tight. Cope with this response to stress by making sure your shoulders are relaxed and away from your neck. Try shaking your arms, neck and head gently to loosen tight muscles.

Reducing Stress

We learned tips for reducing stress before it happens, such as:

- Taking time to relax each day
- Taking time to do the things you enjoy
- Going for a walk
- Developing long and short-term goals
- Spending time with your friends and family
- Learning to say “no”
- Trying not to procrastinate
- Asking people for help
- Don’t smoke
- Getting enough sleep
- Trying to limit caffeine
- Eating a well-balanced diet
- Practicing stress reduction exercises (ex. taking deep breaths)
- Participating in regular exercise

SESSION 8

Talking to Your Doctor

Getting Ready for Your Visit

We discussed how improving communication with our doctor will allow us to get the most out of our visits and help us to self-manage our chronic conditions more effectively.

We reviewed these tips for getting ready for the doctor’s office:

- Make a list of your concerns and prioritize them
- Pack all of your medicines or update your list of medicine
- Bring your insurance card and updated information
- Pack a pen and paper for taking notes
- Consider bringing a family member or friend
- Plan for an interpreter if you know you’ll need one

After your visit

We discussed these steps for reviewing information after your doctor's visit:

- Make sure you understand everything the doctor/ care team has said
- Make sure you have spoken to other members of your care team (social worker, care coordinator)
- Ask your doctor for any brochures, facts sheet or other written or visual materials
- Write down the date of your next doctors' appointment

The PeakHealth “**Doctor's Visit Checklist**” and “**Doctor's Visit Conversation Guide**” can help during your next doctors visit!

SESSION 9

Coping With Pain

Managing Pain

Together, we discussed our different experiences of pain, which have different levels of severity at different times throughout the day for different lengths of time. Sometimes the pain is manageable, but at other times, it can push you to your limit. Learning to manage pain is an important part of self-management.

10 Alternatives for Chronic Pain Management

We learned that besides medication, you can also manage pain through:

1. **Lifestyle modifications** – exercise, reducing alcohol consumption, reducing stress levels, for example
2. **Guided imagery** – pain intervention that uses relaxation techniques and visualization of calming mental images to manage acute and chronic pain.

3. **Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)** – a form of talk therapy that helps people identify and develop skills to manage negative thoughts and behaviors. For pain management, CBT helps patients change their awareness of pain and develop better coping skills – even if their pain doesn’t change.
4. **Group therapy, music therapy, and pet therapy** – these are some additional ways to help comfort and reduce pain.
5. **Aromatherapy** – smelling something pleasant can reduce your pain and has been used for thousands of years. It can also reduce anxiety, depression and even help joint pain and headaches.
6. **Massage therapy** – massage comes in two forms, relaxation and rehabilitative massage. It can directly reduce inflammation and can help in many different types of pain.
7. **Hypnotherapy** – patients are guided to focus on comfort and pain relief. It can help with many painful conditions including fibromyalgia and can help with sleep and tiredness.
8. **Chiropractic** – chiropractors can help all sorts of painful conditions including back pain, neck pain, migraine headaches, fibromyalgia, and joint pain.
9. **Diet/Herbal treatment** – decrease dairy, processed foods, sugar, alcohol and carbohydrates. Increase herbal supplements, vegetables and non-processed foods. Avoid packaged items!
10. **Acupuncture** - acupuncture uses needles to stimulate certain points on or under the skin. Has been used for hundreds of years for many conditions including treating pain, nausea, and decreasing inflammation.

SESSION 10

Positive Emotions

About Positive Emotions

We know that positive emotions are the ones most of us prefer to have more frequently, yet we often find ourselves entertaining negative emotions and wonder why we stop taking care of ourselves and why our medical conditions get worse.

We learned that noticing when you're experiencing positive emotions, what they feel like and how they relate to our health will help you to manage your chronic conditions.

The more time we hold positive emotions that match who we really are at our core, the healthier we feel.

Benefits of Positive Emotions

We learned that positive emotions can provide benefits, including:

- Better health and productivity
- Stronger relationships
- More effective coping strategies and greater resilience
- Protection against cognitive decline
- Better productivity and more effective work
- More effective leadership and enhanced job performance
- A greater feeling of connectedness to others

SESSION 11

Maintaining Health Habits

How to Maintain Healthy Habits

We discussed using all the healthy tips and skills we've learned throughout the PeakHealth Wellness Program to maintain our health and improve our self-management long-term.

We learned 5 Tips to help us maintain healthy habits:

- Tell people. Ask the people closest for help staying on track and overcoming barriers.
- Share your success. Talking about the goals you've already reached will get you excited to keep it going!
- Jumpstart your workout. To keep things from getting old, try a new type of exercise or a new workout class.
- Spread the health! Teaching others to be healthier will help you keep up with the changes you've already made.
- Stay on track. Remember to continue writing down your eating and exercise habits. It's common for people to "drift" away from new habits once they've met some of their goals

Remember to do weekly check ins with yourself to see what went well the previous week and what you can improve on.

Continue creating health goals for yourself that you can accomplish over a short period of time. Make sure they are things you CAN and WANT to do!

Continue working on your action plans that will help support you in accomplishing your goals!