

Behavioral Change and Motivational Techniques

TASK 1

AWARENESS INVENTORY

Check the space by the letter T for the statements that you think are true and the space by the letter F for the statements that you think are false.

T__ F__ 1. Locus of control refers to how much control you have over events that affect your life.

T__ F__ 2. If you are socially isolated you are more likely to exercise regularly.

T__ F__ 3. Body cathexis refers to how highly you regard your physical self.

T__ F__ 4. It is wise to set ambitious goals in the beginning of planning a program.

T__ F__ 5. In planning your exercise program you should increase your performance goals gradually.

T__ F__ 6. It is a good idea to use a program designed for general population.

TASK 2

ASSESS YOUR LOCUS OF CONTROL

For each pair of statements, circle the item that best describes your beliefs.

1. a) Promotions are earned by hard work.
b) Promotions are a result of being in the right place at the right time.
2. a) Meeting someone to love is a matter of luck.
b) Meeting someone to love depends on going out often to meet many people.
3. a) Living a long life is a function of heredity.
b) Living a long life is a function of adopting healthy habits.
4. a) Those skilled at sports are born well coordinated.
b) Those skilled at sports work hard learning the skills.
5. a) You can make your life a happy one.
b) Happiness is a matter of fate.
6. a) Most people are so sure of their opinions that nothing can change their minds.
b) A logical argument can convince most people.
7. a) Air pollution can be controlled if citizens become angry about it.
b) Air pollution is an inevitable result of technological progress.
8. a) People who exercise regularly set up their schedules to do so.
b) Some people simply don't have time for regular exercise.

Scoring

Give yourself 1 point for each listed response:

1 - a, 2 - b, 3 - b, 4 - b, 5 - a, 6 - b, 7 - a, 8 - a

PSYCHOSOCIAL FACTORS TO CONSIDER

1. Locus of Control

Some people believe that they can control events in their lives. This construct is called one's locus of control. People who believe in this construct possess an internal locus of control. People who do not believe in the construct possess an external locus.

Externals believe that the course of their lives is a matter of luck, fate, chance, or the actions of powerful others. Relative to physical fitness, you might believe that whether you are in good shape or not is a function of luck or genetic makeup.

Internals believe that what they get is, for most part, a result of what they do. An internal locus of control is important if you are serious about becoming physically fit.

2. Social Isolation

We all need to interact with other people. Researchers have found that the social support we have helps prevent us from getting ill and enhances the quality of our lives. Conversely, not having significant others with whom to share our joys and sorrows causes ill health and social isolation. You should not ignore your social self when structuring your fitness program. To do so is to endanger your health.

3. Self-Esteem

What you think of your self, whether that perception is accurate or not, influences your fitness, health and wellness. If you do not think highly of yourself, you might not believe that you can become fit. You may lack confidence or think that beginning a fitness program is futile. In particular, what you think of your body, your bodily self-esteem – sometimes called body cathexis – will affect your health and fitness.

STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING FITNESS GOALS

1. Goal Setting

In determining your fitness goals, it is important to set realistic goals and to assess your progress periodically. There is a problem in being realistic. Some of us are has-been athletes expecting to perform at the level we could when we were younger and practiced daily. Others of us are never-beens with grand delusions and dreams that will never fulfill. Do not fall into either trap when setting your fitness goals. In the beginning it is wise to set goals that are easy to achieve. In this way, when you attain them you will be more likely to achieve subsequent goals.

2. Periodically Assess

Once you decide on your fitness goals, periodically assess how you are meeting them. If you conclude that you are making progress in an appropriate amount of time, keep doing what you are doing. If your assessment indicates problems meeting your goals, make adjustments. Maybe you need to exercise longer, more intensely, or more frequently.

3. Behavioral Change Techniques

Among the more effective techniques you can employ in meeting your fitness goals are the use of social support, contracting, gradual programming or tailoring.

Adopting a habit of regular exercise is much easier if others encourage you. Scientific studies indicate that **social support** from family or friends improves adherence to a fitness program. On the other hand, not having an exercise partner was reported to be a barrier to physical activity.

Another way to use social support is to develop a **contract** to achieve a certain exercise goal and have someone else witness it. If that person then helps you periodically assess your progress, you will be more likely to be successful. In a contract you can identify the reward for achieving the goal and the punishment for not achieving the goal.

I _____ (your name), desire to improve my physical fitness because _____ (the reason). I have decided I will _____ (your goal) by _____ (date). If I achieve this goal, I will reward myself by _____ (reward)). If I do not achieve my goal, I will punish myself by _____ (punishment).

Too often, people who have never exercised regularly or who have not done so for some time expect to be able to run a mile under 4 minutes. This is not realistic for many people. Instead, they should use a graduated plan in which they start slowly and **gradually increase** both frequency and intensity.

No two people are alike. When you adopt an exercise program designed for a group without adjusting it to your own needs, you are increasing the likelihood that you will soon stop exercising regularly. Some people are free to exercise in the afternoon, others in the evening. Some people are in better physical condition than others. Some are more committed to exercise than others. We could go on and on, but the point is that any program must be **tailored** to the individual.

TASK 3

Discuss the following statements:

1. Everyone should develop an internal locus of control, because people really can control all aspects of their lives.
2. The best way to become fit is simply to make up your mind that you will do it.
3. People do not achieve their fitness goals because they do not work long enough.
4. When trying to change a behavior, it is best to work at changing by yourself so that you do not embarrass yourself in front of other people.

(Adapted from: Greenberg, J.S.; Dintiman, G. B.; Oakes, B., M. *Physical Fitness and Wellness*, Human Kinetics)