

## **Incorporating Physical Activity in the OPMG**

Incorporating physical activity in the OPMG can be a great way to give participants the motivation and encouragement they need to include physical activity in their daily life. Many times participants do not feel confident enough to embark on an exercise routine on their own or have the knowledge and resources to begin. At WIC, we can give them the tools to get started while building skills and confidence.

To get started, the instructor must consider the staff available, time allotted, size of class, budget, and size of the demonstration space. Ways to include physical activity include:

### **Nutrition Education Class**

A nutrition education class that includes physical activity can be done. Using an exercise DVD is a popular choice when incorporating exercise into a WIC class. Choose certain portions of the DVD to demonstrate for a set amount of time. About 15 – 20 minutes is best. If participants are given the DVD to take home, do small segments from different parts of the DVD to show the participants what the DVD contains. The class can be geared toward adults, children or the whole family.

### **Designing the Class with Physical Activity**

The CCNE template should be followed when designing a nutrition education class with physical activity. The classes should have objectives, key content points, an introduction and an icebreaker, topic discussion, activity, and an evaluation component. See State developed class PN-000-08, “Get Your Groove On Mama!” for an example on how to develop this type of CCNE class.

As in any lesson, state a general objective for the class. For example, clients will:

- Name two ways they plan to include physical activity in their routine during the next week.
- Participate in at least 2 minutes of the 10-minute workout from the fitness DVD

The physical activity portion shall not exceed 30 minutes of activity. The total class time should not exceed one hour. This type of class will have a nutrition/health component that includes a discussion. The classes should not be a “stand-alone” fitness class and participants should understand that this is still a WIC nutrition class that incorporates physical activity.

Participants can choose to stop participating in the physical activity at any time and still receive NE credit.

### **Group Walks**

The class instructor may choose to take participants for a brief walk outdoors. Explain to participants that the group will take a short walk and that it is optional. The class instructor can choose to continue the discussion while walking, but only if it does not interfere with safety. Going for walks is a good way to demonstrate how to use a pedometer. Set a goal with the participants and show how they can

achieve that goal. If the weather does not permit walking outside, have an alternate activity indoors. Also keep in mind that participants may need to stay behind if they do not have the proper shoes, are carrying small children, etc. Participants can then be brought to the classroom to finish the discussion. The class instructor can also choose to have the discussion before the walk and end the class upon returning from the walk. If NE credit is given, follow the CCNE template to develop a class that includes walking outdoors.

### **Exercise Demonstration**

Another way to incorporate activity is to briefly demonstrate how to use simple exercise equipment. This is especially helpful if participants are given fitness incentives. For example, if resistance bands are given to participants as an incentive, demonstrate how to use the resistance bands and the participants can perform the moves with the class instructor. The class instructor should understand how to use the equipment properly.

### **Support Groups**

Another great option would be to lead participants in forming walking groups or other support type groups that get together outside of regular clinic hours to incorporate physical activity. This would be done on a voluntary basis and would help participants get to know each other. The instructor can give the participants a chance to exchange contact information with each other and encourage them to meet on their own to do physical activity. The instructor can give suggestions on how they can include the children and go for walks in the park, etc. If a staff member chose to participate in the physical activity, it would be on a voluntary basis.

### **Review safety measures**

- If required from your parent agency, have participants sign a waiver to participate.
- Make sure there is plenty of space for participants to do the moves safely.
- If you are short on space, modify the moves so they can be done standing in place or sitting down.
- If participants are not wearing appropriate shoes, they can perform the workout in socks or bare feet.
- Make sure floor is clean and safe.
- The room should be free of obstructions or structures that could get in the way of participants performing the moves.
- Keep the room at a temperature that doesn't cause overheating.
- Keep the volume of music at a level that participants can still hear the class leader.
- Any equipment used for the class should be in good condition.
- Inspect equipment regularly to prevent injury.
- Participants should be given instruction on how to properly use equipment to prevent injury.
- Participants can choose to stop at any time or refrain from the activity.
- Keep an eye on participants. The instructor leads the class and takes responsibility for keeping the participants safe.

- If you take them for a walk outdoors, only go to safe places and keep them on a route that utilizes a sidewalk and/or grassy area. Obey all traffic signals.
- If children are in the class, have a separate activity for them such as coloring pages or let them participate in the class. Have plenty of room available for everyone to move.
- If it is a family activity class, make exercise moves simple for everyone. Or show how to modify the moves.
- Inform participants to stop immediately if they feel pain, have trouble breathing or have pain in their chest.

### **Fitness Demo Tips:**

- Remind everyone that they have fun.
- During the video, make comments like “You’re doing great!”
- Follow the CCNE format if giving NE credit for this class.
- Watch and become familiar with the fitness DVD. The WIC instructor should perform the workout along with the class participants.
- Find other community resources available for participants such as recreational programs, YMCA, etc. Find safe walking trails for participants to utilize. Provide contact information to participants.