

SCAN'S **Pulse**

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Conference Highlights

Coaching in Leadership and Healthcare Conference

Harvard Medical School and Institute
of Coaching Professional Association
October 21-22, 2011
Boston, MA

The Institute of Coaching (www.instituteofcoaching.org) is dedicated to supporting research, theory, and best practices in health and wellness coaching. The Institute strives to raise

the bar and build a scientific foundation on best practices of leadership and health and wellness coaching. Hence, the goal of the fourth annual Coaching in Leadership and Healthcare Conference was to help participants understand a variety of coaching models, discuss emerging research and efficacy of coaching models and practices, and apply coaching skills in health care practices to enhance outcomes.

More than 500 people from around the world attended this conference. Of those, the majority were social workers, therapists, doctors, nurses, executive coaches, and health and wellness coaches—but only a very few dietitians. The Institute of Coaching invites dietitians to become more involved in this emerging style of health care. The fifth annual conference will be held September 28-29, 2012.

Introduction to Coaching

■ Athletes have coaches. Why not everyone else? We certainly live in a complex world and most people need some help navigating their life course, particularly when it comes to diet, exercise, and taking care of their health. While coaching is not always what people want or need, it seems to work for people with a readiness for change.

■ Coaching is a process of change that revolves around the strengths and potential of a person. We fail to help clients find their self-motivation and confidence when we tell them what to do, how to do it, and what will happen if they fail to do it (e.g., "You need to lose 40 pounds. Knock off the fast food—and if you don't, you'll end up with diabetes and heart disease.").

■ A coaching approach to health care differs from the current medical system's approach that tries to "fix" people and can create negativity and stress. For example, if a doctor tells a client to lose weight, the client may start thinking more about food, feel stressed, and end up gaining weight.

■ People only truly listen to one person: themselves! Hence, a more effective approach is to ask a client, "What do you value most in life? How would losing weight allow you to have more of what you treasure most? What strengths can you use in your journey to have more vitality and health? Are your actions bringing you closer to being the person you want to be?"

■ Motivational coaching is about getting people to change for the right reasons: their own. People don't make changes because of rational arguments (e.g., "Losing weight will help improve your diabetes.") but rather because of heartfelt emotional arguments (e.g., "I want to live to see my grandchildren grow up."). People change when they hear themselves talk about why they want to change and how they can be successful.

■ Clients need trusting relationships that help, support, and encourage them during the process of change. Coaches can create that trusting relationship and help people discover what they want out of life and how they want to experience life. Coaches help people articulate and reach their dreams—and create a compelling sense of purpose and mission.

■ The quality of the conversation determines the quality of our relationships. And the quality of the relationships determines the quality of the system/organization.

Suggestions for Effective Coaching

Instead of telling people what they have to do and what your reasons are, these steps of motivational coaching tend to be more effective: 1) Acknowledge autonomy ("You don't HAVE to change."), and 2) Ask how ready the client is to make a change, such as adding exercise four times a week.

"Health should be the centerpiece for all decisions that will define the success of your life."

■ If the client seems resistant, say, "Right now, you don't have time to exercise. It's up to you whether or not you exercise." By telling the client he doesn't have to do something, he may then want to exercise.

■ If the client says he's ready to exercise twice a week, ask why he wants to exercise even once a week, and why he hasn't completely given up exercise. The client's answer makes it clearer why he wants to do some-

thing—and it should be for the right reason: to please himself.

■ Reflect on the most motivational part of the client's answer.

Health Coaching in Businesses

We need a work environment where taking care of one's body is top priority, because good health ignites top performance. Too many organizations have tired workers. Sleep deprivation hurts human energy and decision-making, and also has an impact on families. As a 3-year old boy reported, "I think my daddy doesn't like me because he is always tired when I am around."

■ Unfortunately, less than 26% of employees believe their company has a strong culture of health. Taking care of employees' health is taking care of business, but lack of employee engagement is the biggest obstacle to changing health behaviors. Employees become engaged when they feel cared for as a person.

■ Health should be the centerpiece for all decisions that will define the success of your life. What do you want to be at the end of your life? How can you create a life that supports that vision?

Strategies for Nurturing Resilience

Many people come from very troubled families, but why are some of these people resilient and go on to lead fulfilling lives? What can parents do to make their children more resilient? What are the important qualities that make a person resilient?

Generally what makes a person resilient is having at least one individual who believes in him or her—a charismatic adult from whom strength can be gathered.

■ People have three basic needs:

1. *The need to belong and feel connected.* Greeting people with a smile

and by name makes them feel connected.

2. *The need to be autonomous and determine their own destiny.* Tell your clients, "If there is anything I say that you disagree with, let me know."

3. *The need to feel competent.* We all have things that we do well; we have islands of competence amid our oceans of inadequacy! No matter how successful you are, you are likely to

still have thoughts of "I'm a fraud; I'm not good enough." By getting people to see their strengths, they can stop focusing on what is wrong with them.

■ Successful clients focus on what they can control, as illustrated by thinking "I have no control over X, but I can control my attitude and how I manage the problem."

■ We learn from our successes and our setbacks. Relapses happen, so ask,

"What is your plan to deal with a relapse?" and help your clients develop Plan A and Plan B.

Summarized by Nancy Clark, MS, RD, CSSD, editor of PULSE's "Conference Highlights," sports dietitian in private practice in the Boston area, and author of Nancy Clark's Sports Nutrition Guidebook; she can be reached via www.nancyclarkrd.com.

Reviews

Nutrition for Sport and Exercise, 2nd edition

Marie Dunford PhD, RD, and J. Andrew Doyle, PhD
Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 20 Davis Drive, Belmont, CA 94002
800/354-9706;
www.cengage.com/Wadsworth,
2010, softcover, 602 pp, \$ 139.99
ISBN 10:1-111-57828-1

The first time I taught sports nutrition to undergraduates there was only one textbook available. Times have changed and now there are many excellent texts—and Dunford and Doyle's 2nd edition of *Nutrition for Sport and Exercise* is one of the best. The strength of this book is the pairing of a registered dietitian with an exercise physiologist to marry the two disciplines in a seamless text. The style of writing is straightforward, engaging, and scientifically accurate. The authors maintain a professional approach to the subject; there are no personal anecdotes or name dropping of famous athletes that seem to pepper many sports nutrition books. These authors go for substance and fact-based presentation of material that will speak to students as well as practitioners who want a good reference book on the shelf.

The book is divided into 13 chapters ranging from coverage of macro- and micronutrients to diet planning

and exercise for lifelong fitness and health. Each chapter starts with objectives renamed as a learning plan and a self-assessment quiz to ascertain current knowledge of the chapter contents. Chapters feature spotlights on hot topic issues (for example, in the protein chapter the spotlights are on protein quality, supplements, amino acids as regulators, and maximizing skeletal muscle mass). Each chapter also contains application sections, case studies with athletes that allow for the transfer of knowledge to a practice setting, research topics, and information on where to find online resources in the "Internet café."

Professionals will especially like the "keeping it in perspective" sections, where tips are provided to balance the media hype on sports nutrition. For example, in the chapter on carbohydrate, the authors note that carbohydrates are not the fattening enemy and carbohydrate-rich foods have a much-needed place in the diet, with a gentle reminder that eating should be fun and enjoyable. Each chapter is well illustrated with relevant photographs, tables, and charts to help to visualize the text.

New to this edition is a thorough review of the literature published since the first edition and the inclusion of a "focus on research" segment to help

bridge science and application. Also new are key points that summarize the chapter contents. Chapters were reordered to provide a logical flow to the content, and the appendixes are expanded. Instructors who adopt the text will find a wide array of support materials to help organize lectures and student learning.

This book provides the student and the practitioner with essential tools to advance the discipline of sports nutrition. SCAN members will recognize the integrity of the authors on every page.

Marie Dunford created the first sports nutrition course at California State University, Fresno and taught the course for 16 years. She has written three other books and develops online sports nutrition courses for nutrition and exercise professionals. Andy Doyle is an associate professor of exercise physiology at Georgia State University and teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in exercise physiology, exercise testing, and fitness assessment.

Reviewed by Chris Rosenbloom, PhD, RD, CSSD, a nutrition professor emeritus at Georgia State University in Atlanta who currently has a nutrition consulting practice and is the sports dietitian for Georgia State Athletics.