

Case Study #2

A Positive Pre-Diabetes Lifestyle

We know that someone diagnosed with “Pre-diabetes” can prevent the full-blown development of diabetes 70% of the time when they are successful at lifestyle improvement.

Am. Diabetes Assoc.
www.diabetes.org/diabetes-basics/prevention/pre-diabetes/pre-diabetes-faqs.html

This actual case study client, while not officially diagnosed as pre-diabetic, knew she was on her way there. Coaching was skillfully conducted by a Wellness Mapping 360° student who completed this case study and became a Wellness Mapping 360° Certified Wellness Coach. The coach was also an R.N., and did a good job of being clear about these two roles. Names and some details have been changed to respect confidentiality, but this is a real case.

Wellness Mapping 360° Case Study — Coach Shirley Client Information — My

client is age 64. “Angelina” is a retired executive and lives in an active adult lifestyle community. She is a past participant in our “Healthy Self” weight loss program. She came into The Center (where I work) to sign up for another program and shared that she had had a “bad year” related to her weight loss effort. After some discussion, I asked her if she would like to have wellness coaching to help support her efforts. We discussed what Wellness Coaching is and she agreed to try it.

Over the past year my client has been involved in a financial dispute involving thousands of dollars in which she is being denied payment so far. This has totally consumed her thoughts and energy. As a result she returned to unhealthy eating habits and lack of exercise.

My client is single (never been married) and lives alone. She has several close friends and belongs to a Singles Club in the community. She gets support from her friends but does rely on herself a lot.

Her main health concern is obesity. She started out over 300 pounds (136 kg.) when she initially participated in our weight loss program. She lost 20 lbs. in eight weeks and then went on to lose 40 more pounds. Currently, she states she has gained 20 lbs. back over the past year, and her fasting blood glucose was 120 when she had it checked at a local screening. She is concerned that she is on the path to diabetes.

A. Setting the Foundation – Meeting Ethical Guidelines and Professional Standards

I informed the client when we initially discussed the option of Wellness Coaching that I was in the process of completing my certification for Wellness Coaching. I also told her that I had to complete a case study and would be using our experience to fulfill this requirement.

I discussed the basics of coaching – informing her that I would

be offering support and accountability, not information. Angelina thought this would be perfect because she has been through two structured weight loss programs and knows what she needs to do. She was looking for accountability. We agreed that coaching would be a good resource for her.

We established frequency of appointments and her responsibilities as a client. I gave her the welcome packet to complete and established our first appointment. During our first appointment, we reviewed information she shared in the welcome packet.

B. Co-Creating the Relationship

At our initial meeting we reviewed information in the Wellness Packet. As she handed me her packet, she asked in a joking way if her information was going to be published in the community. I took that time to seriously review that all of the information that was shared would be handled in strict confidence.

All of our appointments have started on time. During our first session, we reviewed her “Wheel of Life”. She discussed prior times in her life when she volunteered and helped people in her neighborhood. As she was creating her action plan, she had not mentioned volunteering. I asked permission to suggest adding something to her plan. I pointed out that she “lit up” when she talked about volunteering and helping others and offered that she might consider exploring new volunteer opportunities in her action plan. She said, “Oh, yes...this is about more than just discussing my food and exercise plan.” I think this demonstrated to her that I was listening to her story and helped build the coaching relationship.

C. Communicating Effectively

The previous story illustrated listening and exploring my client’s values. I worked at paraphrasing and reiterating what my client was saying. I allowed her to vent about her insurance issue that has consumed her thoughts and energy the past year. Then I asked my client the “how is it working for you” question. She acknowledged that it hasn’t helped her overall health and was ready to move on. It was the perfect time for a powerful question.

D. Facilitating Learning and Results

I have helped my client become increasingly aware of how her whole life affects her wellness. I believe she has viewed various aspects of her life compartmentally, so I have helped her explore how fulfilled she is in each area and how it effects her overall wellness.

When designing actions, I have challenged my client when she seemed over zealous in her action plan (going from a year of not exercising to stating she was going to exercise 5x/week). She has been very diligent about setting goals each week. These goals have focused on exercise, food journaling, and exploring volunteer opportunities. In managing her progress and holding the client accountable, we discuss the previous goals set. She has met her goals each week. We celebrate these successes and look forward to the next week.

She has attended nutrition lectures, a diabetes fair, and a diabetes support group. She has not been diagnosed as having diabetes, but she sought out information because she felt she was on the road to pre-diabetes. After attending the support group, she shared that it was very motivating because she didn't want to have to deal with the issues that were discussed. She has since had a physical with her primary care physician. Her fasting blood glucose was 106. She asked me some questions about her lab work. Before discussing her blood work and answering her questions about diabetes, I told her I was "switching my hat" from coach to "Nurse Shirley". Then I made it very clear when we were switching back to coaching.

As we finished our most recent session, we took some time to evaluate the overall coaching process. Angelina paused and said, "You know...one of the most amazing things is that I don't think about the financial problem I'm facing anymore. Whatever is going to happen, will happen, and I will deal with it then. But, I don't think about it every day. My focus has changed." She has lost weight, started volunteering at a local animal shelter (she loves dogs), and is seeking more social opportunities. She feels the coaching process has really helped her.

E. Insights Gained and Lifestyle Changes

Learning about Wellness Coaching and actually implementing it has been very rewarding for me. It has "given me the permission" to focus on my own wellness. I can certainly empathize with my client when something in your life becomes all consuming. She reminds me that my life and lifestyle are more important than one specific issue that is going on at a particular time. There will always be something that can distract you. Learning to apply the stages of change with weight loss has also been very enlightening. My spouse has also been somewhat of a "case study" for me. I never really understood before when he would discuss "thinking" about losing weight. This was a big ah-ha moment for me. His ah-ha moment was when he said, "You really have to work at this every day, don't you." It isn't – go on a diet, lose weight, and you are done. It is

truly about a lifestyle change. A lifestyle change for my client has been the change in mental focus as discussed before. Angelina has completely changed her focus. She also has a broader view of wellness. She has been so focused on her weight and hasn't really related how the rest of her life can affect her weight problem. We will continue to explore this because in our most recent coaching session, we were discussing what spirituality means. She has taken this very literally and has felt she wasn't spiritual because she doesn't go to church. I think as she researches this and I challenge her, she will change her perception.