

Behavior Change Approach

Produced by: Parkinson Disease Knowledge Translation Task Force

Fact Sheet

Physical therapists should implement behavior-change approaches to improve physical activity and quality of life in individuals with Parkinson disease.

Moderate Strength Recommendation

What is a behavior change approach?

Many PTs use behavior change strategies naturally, such as goal setting, client-centered care, action planning, and helping the client problem solve for long-term behavior change. These approaches help to promote client autonomy and self-efficacy.

Why are behavior change approaches beneficial?

Behavior change approaches help build rapport and shared understanding of the treatment and goals. These approaches for physical activity apply evidence-based health behavior change theories, including self-determination theory, social cognitive theory, transtheoretical model, and the stages of change. Physical therapists can enhance their traditional physical therapy skills to promote their clients' long-term physical activity participation and quality of life by using behavior change approaches.

Types of people with PD (PwP) who would most/least benefit from behavior change approaches.

1. Behavior change approaches are appropriate for people with mild-moderate PD (H&Y 1-3), based on published studies.
2. Behavior change approaches may be less beneficial in individuals with cognitive impairments. Behavior change approaches would need to be adapted for people with cognitive impairment.

Considerations for practice setting

1. Behavior change approaches have been studied in outpatient settings. They may be applied within physical therapy or in conjunction with community-based exercise programs.
2. Behavior change approaches can be applied using telerehabilitation.

Considerations for implementation (cost and space)

1. The effectiveness of any behavior change approach is reliant on the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the facilitator.
2. Relationships between the interprofessional care team may facilitate the use of behavior change and self-management strategies.

Considerations related to safety

1. Because behavior change strategies are used in the context of increasing physical activity and exercise, fall risk and safe community-based exercise should be considered.
2. Behavior change approaches can elicit discussions related to mood disorders or other symptoms that are outside the scope of physical therapy. Identifying a community provider or integrated care team (e.g., neurologist, psychologists, counselors, and psychiatrists) can help ensure optimal care is provided.



Types of behavior change approaches:

Many PTs have learned to use some of these behavior change strategies as a part of their regular practice. We do not know which approaches are best for which individuals.

Strategy	Definition	Intervention
Goal setting	A process where one identifies something that they wish to accomplish, and they establish specific, time-based behavior targets that are measurable, achievable, and realistic in order to attain these goals.	Use SMART Client-Centered Goals: S pecific, M easurable, A chievable, R ealistic, and T ime-Sensitive Consider goal difficulty, provide feedback
Action planning	Create an organized plan, or series of steps required to be taken in order to achieve a set goal and for how to get back on track if derailed (e.g., contact the PT again).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help develop the plan and identify steps. • For each action, there needs to be a person responsible and a social support if available, a target completion date, and a way to verify successful completion.
Coaching Style Interventions	Personalized instruction combined with physical training to enable the client to acquire or enhance skills related to exercise, lifestyle physical activity, or mobility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess starting point and their learning style. • Personalize education and practice • Provide follow-ups to check-in with client, provide feedback (see below). • Re-assess and further tailor education.
Feedback	The transmission of either evaluative or corrective information about an action, skill, or process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive reinforcement • Educate about standard PT and physical activity measures. • Provide knowledge on past measures, norms, and progress toward goals.
Shared decision-making	Clinicians and patients work together to establish appropriate health care decisions that are meaningful to the patient.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce a choice • Describe options using decision support tools • Help patient explore preferences with appropriate information
Motivational Interviewing Style Interventions	A collaborative conversation style for strengthening a person's own motivation and commitment to change. Key processes include engaging, focusing, evoking, planning, and tracking.	Promote the client making decisions and problem solving with advice and OARS Communication: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask Open ended questions (see below) • Provide Affirmations • Practice Reflective listening • Summarize points
Open-ended questions	Ask question that cannot be answered with a simple "yes" or "no" response. Phrase questions in such a way that requires a longer, or more detailed response.	Start with an open-ended question or follow a close-ended question with open-ended to gain more information. Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What..., Why..., How...? • Tell me more about..., Could you describe...? • What do you think about...?
Problem solving	Asking the patient to help verbally problem solve through an exercise barrier	Six-step process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize the problem • Create possible solutions • Evaluate alternatives • Determine viable solution • Execute solution • Evaluate outcomes

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