

Leader TOOLS

Keeping participants focused
on positive lifestyle choices

1st Quarter 2019
January – February – March

Observances & Resources

JANUARY – NATIONAL MENTORING MONTH

 National Mentoring Month was launched in 2002 by MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership and the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health to emphasize the need for mentors to ensure positive outcomes for our young people. The goals of this campaign are:

- Raise awareness of various forms of mentoring
- Recruit individuals to mentor
- Encourage organizations to engage members in mentoring

The health and fitness industry needs trained program leaders and certified instructors and personal trainers. You have the opportunity to serve as a mentor to help individuals through the process. Allow potential leaders to attend your classes, shadow your teaching, and when appropriate, team teach classes. Provide resources for education and training. Assist with exam preparation. Our field is hands-on, so we must be willing to get involved in guiding and motivating the next generation. Email julie@aeawave.com and share how you have benefited from having a mentor or how you are actively serving as a mentor to someone else!

FEBRUARY – NATIONAL BAKE FOR FAMILY FUN MONTH

Bake for Family Fun Month promotes baking as an ancient family ritual and offers a great experience for friends and family alike. Baking creates a shared love of family, friends and food that comes across as you build traditions to pass on to future generations. How do you celebrate this national observance? Head to the kitchen and start baking, sharing memories passed down to you over the years or learning new things together. Want to take it to the next level, make this a class project and share your freshly baked treats with neighbors, new parents in your church, those in the community who need assistance, or facility members to promote your classes. To keep your baking projects nutritious as well as delicious, tie this into March's observance (see right).

According to the website, “**Bake For Family Fun Month** encourages you to get together and build a history of loving family memories centered in the kitchen, and if you have a great time with it, you can just carry it out through the rest of the year!” 

MARCH – NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH®

An annual nutrition education and information campaign created by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, this focuses on the importance of making informed food choice in conjunction with developing good eating and physical activity habits. The Academy's vision, a world where everyone thrives through the power of food and nutrition, is built around several key points. Healthy eating does not have to be complicated. Discover the benefits of a healthy eating style by choosing a variety of healthful foods and drinks. Choose healthier option even when not at home – consider portion sizes. Physical activity goes hand-in-hand with healthful eating; find activities that you enjoy and participate most days of the week.



Resource provided by the
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TIPS TO TEACHING WITH PASSION & SKILL

Ronda Brodsky

As AFAP/AFEP Program Leaders, we know the program guidelines and our class participants, but it is still important to always practice, practice, and practice. No matter how many years of experience we have, no matter our level of education and training, we can all continue to improve our skills and offer better outcomes with each class that we teach!

Here are some of my favorite teaching tips that have helped me to help others through exercise:

- Before you begin, create a mental picture of success. Envision what your class will look like as participants do a wonderful job while enjoying your planned activities. Expect your participants to do well in class.
- Have clear objectives for every class.
- Be prepared with your plan, but always anticipate a bump or two in the road. Have options ready if needed.
- Start and end on time; this means showing up early.
- Make your class worthwhile and valuable to every participant.
- Welcome and accept challenges or changes – a new participant joining the class, the weather causing you to move your class from the pool to the studio, or traffic causing people to arrive late.
- Thank each person for coming to class.
- Be there for your participants emotionally and connect with each participant, always showing kindness.
- Give clear and concise instructions at all times. Help participants understand the exercise by using a variety of cueing styles.
- Never talk down to your participants.
- Be that positive influence that we all need in life. Put yourself in the other person's shoes before speaking.
- Use correct terminology as outlined in the program manual. Consistency helps participants to learn and retain information.
- Encourage the participants to get to know one another. New friendships are always good and help create a feeling of inclusion. For some, this may be their only chance to interact with others during the day.
- Use praise often but be sincere.
- When giving feedback make sure it is positive while encouraging the correct behavior. "Stand tall and lengthen your spine" will get better results than "Stop slouching!"
- Patiently answer all questions, referring to other professionals when needed. Remain within your scope of practice. Instead of saying, "I don't know", say, "I am not sure but I will get back to you with the correct answer."
- Find a personal mentor to assist in your professional growth.
- Adapt each class to your students' needs. Remember this is their class so their workout is your goal.
- Reflect on the class to help you better prepare for the next one.

Enjoy teaching each class and appreciate your participants. Enthusiasm is contagious!



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BRINGING JOY TO YOUR CLASSES

Bonita Koenigsknecht

An extremely valid source, Proverbs 17:22, says,

“A merry heart doeth good like a medicine, but a broken spirit drieth the bones.”

And, speaking from experience, I can attest that this is true! In November of 2017, I broke my right femur and a few days later my left fibula. So, no weight-bearing, no walking... almost ‘no anything’ for three months. I completed my rehab in a special wing of a nursing home. My husband visited daily and helped me with endless jigsaw puzzles. Family and friends came to see me, called, and sent cards and care packages. An understanding staff made me feel important to them. Therapists (both physical and occupational) celebrated with me when I improved. All in all, this support team kept my natural sense of humor alive and fostered my optimism.

Our exercise classes for seniors and individuals dealing with chronic health issues also benefit from a good dose of Proverbs’ merriness. One day when I was coming (actually dragging myself might be a truer description) into the YMCA for my 8:00 AM class, the woman at the front desk noticed my lack of enthusiasm. She remarked, “This place can give so much: a reason to get up in the morning, the chance to exercise, and friends to enjoy.” Then she added, with a lilt in her voice, “It can’t get much better.” She was right, and I needed to be reminded.

I walked away wanting to make sure that I brought that joy to my classes. One of the easiest ways to achieve this is through sharing stories about our children or grandchildren. What could be funnier or

cuter, warm the heart more thoroughly, or be told with more sincerity? Maybe your class prefers jokes. You, or an appointed class member, could share a joke, perhaps from “Laughter Is the Best Medicine,” my favorite feature of Reader’s Digest. Other humorous magazines and books are available at bookstores and in public libraries.

Research has shown many benefits of laughter and singing. In future articles, I will share some of these benefits and how they work. When people who disagree (about most anything) can enjoy a good laugh together, some of the tension is relieved. If you have a diverse class where members have long-held and works-for-them opinions, humor can keep the peace and maintain the camaraderie we all want to experience. As Proverbs implies, use the simple tool of a merry heart to bring the spirit back together.



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SUCCESS STORY

Featuring Joke (pronounced 'ioke') Slats
from the Netherlands

Katrien Lemahieu

For five years, I've been teaching at a wonderful, warm-water facility in Apeldoorn. Every Thursday morning I teach three groups, averaging a total of 55 participants. Although they may be experiencing pain, they arrive with smiles... and leave with even bigger ones! One of my goals is to bring fun, laughter, and singing to each class, allowing everyone a chance to forget their worries for a while. I strongly believe that the AFAP program fits their needs. Meet Joke Slats, one of my regulars!

Joke, who just turned 70, began having issues with her shoulder around the age of 30. Doctors initially thought it was bursitis, but after the pain persisted and transitioned to other areas of her body, Joke was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis. With her youngest of four children just one-year-old, she went on with her busy life trying to get through each day. Over time, her fingers became deformed, causing her to stop some of the activities that she loves doing. In her 50s, Joke started listening to her body more and searching for opportunities to improve her condition. She began a water exercise class. The water provided some relaxation, helped slow the progression of the disease, and even allowed her to begin doing volunteer work again.

Three months ago, Joke had a transient ischemic attack (TIA), which affected her walking abilities. She used a walker for 2 months, then came back to the water and is now walking unassisted again! She explains, "The water is helping me to stand still, be in balance more, and I am not afraid to fall." She believes that there is a transfer to her movements on land as well. Her physical therapist notices her being more relaxed and able to correct her alignment and balance when there is a weight shift. Her mind and body react more quickly, and he is proud of her progress.

Joke's shares this tip, "Keep on training, but stay yourself. It is about you!" For example, she has trouble writing and does not want to lose that ability. So, every day she writes a half-page, with plans to progress up to a full page. "If I don't practice this, I will lose it," she says. "I enjoy the Thursday morning classes as there is not so much use of equipment. Using the water is my most powerful tool, so I do not feel left out in this class as there is only water to work with!

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE COMMUNITY



Cynthia Osborne

Here is how our Arthritis Energizers Class at the YWCA Central Carolinas in Charlotte, NC implemented a suggestion from a past issue of the AEA Leader Tools. In August, I announced that September was Fruits & Veggies More Matter® Month. The class started thinking of ways to add more of vegetables and fruits to our daily intake. We had fun with several ideas, such as the suggestion to make half your plate fruits and veggies and the other half ice cream.

During our exploration on this topic, we found out that our facility has a community garden and now some class participants volunteer to help there. One participant designed an educational poster to share more information on the benefits of changing our eating habits to add more fruits and vegetables. Our final project, as a way of sharing with others in the community, was to collect fruits and vegetables for the women who benefit from programs at the YWCA. We prepared baskets of fresh produce, which were greatly appreciated. The Arthritis Energizers class continues to be enthused with information in the Leader Tools.



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STAND UP FOR YOUR HEALTH!

Joyanna Wyne

Pull up a chair. Have a seat. Take a load off. We are so used to thinking about sitting as a good thing, that it's surprising to hear that it can actually harm our health. Yet that's precisely the message we're now getting from the medical community. "What's so bad about sitting," my class participants wondered when I shared this information with them. Actually, it's about what you're not doing when you're sitting. You're not getting oxygen-rich blood to your brain because your blood is pooling in your feet, and research has linked that to a higher risk for memory problems and dementia. Because you're sedentary, you're not getting the metabolic benefits that come with flexing your muscles, and this lack of movement can lead to a host of conditions including heart disease, cancer, diabetes and obesity. Finally, if you're not sitting up straight, your poor posture can stress muscles in your back, spine and neck, resulting in aches and pains.

The good news is that these harmful effects can be mitigated by getting up and moving around. A catchphrase I heard has helped my participants be mindful of counteracting the negative effects of too much sitting. "Take 3 Every 30" is a reminder to get up every 30 minutes and engage in light physical activity for 3 minutes. The reality, though, is that we are often so engrossed in what we are doing – working online, reading, watching tv – that we tend to stay put, so I always suggest setting a timer or using an app to signal when it's time to get up.

Many of my participants have shared things they do when they're "Taking 3." They walk to the refrigerator to get a healthy snack. They stay hydrated with tea or water, and then need a bathroom break. Others, mindful that staring at a computer monitor can be bad for their eyes, get up, blink and focus on a distant object. They may do exercises from class or go to the mailbox, place the remote at a distance, or walk around while on the phone. Brainstorming with your participants will yield more activities. My personal favorite is to turn on some music and dance, and what better call to action than "Get on Your Feet" by Gloria Estefan: "Get on your feet, get up and make it happen. Get on your feet, stand up and take some action!"

WORD GAME

Helen Tilden

Word games, perfect during an active rest period or at the end of class, stimulate the brain and thought process and also work on breathing and speaking. A favorite is the ABC Game, which can target most any topic – fruits, vegetables, flowers, names, places, etc. The ABC game works best if played spontaneously so participants have to think quickly, rather than planning ahead with ideas! Laughter comes when someone is stumped, so be prepared to help them out.

Start in a circle and announce the category for the ABC game. Leader starts with an example from the category that begins with the letter A, the next person names something in the category that starts with B, the next person must come up with an example using C, and it continues around the circle as many times as you want. For example, if you chose fruit for the category you might have Apple, Banana, Cantaloupe, Date, Fig, Elderberry, etc. Check out the Internet for alphabetical listings of your category.

AEA Arthritis Foundation
Program Leader

Get Involved!

Please get involved with future issues of Leader Tools, a free resource provided by AEA. Share innovative ideas for keeping your AFAP and/or AFEP classes filled and participants engaged and excited to return the next time. Highlight a class participant who has seen success through your classes or submit an outstanding program leader for recognition. Ask a question to learn more on a specific arthritis topic or program-related concern. Email your ideas, input or inquiries to julie@aeawave.com



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