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What is Functional Medicine?

WHAT IS FUNCTIONAL MEDICINE COACHING?

- Functional Medicine is an approach to healing that focuses on interconnected body systems (as opposed to curing symptoms.)
- The Functional Medicine model looks to prevent or reverse illness based on the way genes interact with our environment.
- Lifestyle interventions assume a primary role where appropriate for their lower cost and ability to restore health and prevent disease.

THE SEVEN CORE SYSTEMS FUNCTIONAL MEDICINE FOCUSES ON:

- Digestion and assimilation
- Detoxification
- Defense and repair
- Cellular communication
- Cellular transport
- Energy
- Structure

WHAT IS HEALTH COACHING?

Health coaching is the client-led and client-centered process of supporting another person to create the changes needed to experience optimal health.

HOW DOES HEALTH COACHING WORK?

Functional Medicine health coaches work with clients to implement changes in five areas to bring the body back into balance:

- Sleep and relaxation
- Nutrition and hydration
- Exercise and movement
- Social relationships
- Stress

By changing the environment that surrounds our genes, we tell our genes to express themselves in a way that creates optimal health.

Functional Medicine health coaches meet clients where they are ready to change, rather than asking them to change before they are ready. To do this, the coach works with the client’s story in three ways. They:

- Prioritize the Client’s Strengths Story: Use strengths to restore well-being.
- Integrate the Client’s Story: Help clients make the connection between disease onset and underlying antecedents, triggers and mediators.
- Organize the Client’s Story: Facilitate a healing orientation towards adverse life events

QUESTIONS A COACH WOULD ASK:

- When did you feel that you were functioning at your best?
- What was going on in your life just before your symptoms began?
- What do you think has caused your problem?
- How much support do you receive in dealing with your health problems?
- How often do you feel loved or cared for?
Tell Your Story

WHY THE STORY MATTERS:
The practice of Functional Medicine begins by listening to the patient’s story. The story we tell about ourselves and our symptoms can hold clues about our ability to heal ourselves.

- When a coach collaborates and listens to the client’s story, together they can create the redemptive the story.
- The FMHC facilitates the process of discovering the redemptive aspect to one’s personal narrative.
- Most importantly, the FMHC listens for opportunities to reframe the story in light of the client’s unique strengths.

HOW TO USE STORYTELLING TO HEAL:
1. Functional Medicine practitioners will often request a client create a timeline of significant life events, including medical history and important milestones.
2. Then, the Functional Medicine health coach assists clients with making the connections between the modifiable lifestyle factors and the current health challenge.
3. Lastly, the FMHC will use coaching questions to help the client identify the strengths within their story they can leverage to change.

You can use our timeline in the appendix of this book to begin making the critical connections between your environment and your symptoms.

Included in this book are stories relayed to us by Functional Medicine health coaches and clients that demonstrate the power of creating a redemptive narrative.

QUESTIONS A COACH WOULD ASK:
- When did you last feel really well?
- What happened then?
- Was there anything going on in your life at that particular time that might have precipitated this illness, or pain, or symptom?
- What impact have your symptoms had on your life?
You Are Not Your Disease: Rewrite Your Story

Functional Medicine health coaches help clients find new meaning in their life stories through merging positive psychology and narrative practice with Functional Medicine principles.

POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY AND FUNCTIONAL MEDICINE:

PERMA, an acronym created by the founder of Positive Psychology, Dr. Martin Seligman, represents the essential five elements that we need to thrive: Positive emotions, Engagement or flow, Relationships that are meaningful, a sense of Meaning and greater purpose, and Achievement or accomplishment. FMHCs will help a client create growth in all areas.

One of the core tools used is the identification of Character Strengths, the building blocks for health and well-being.

STRENGTHS-SPOTTING:

At the Functional Medicine Coaching Academy, we use the VIA Classification to help our clients and students understand their strengths. It provides a framework for us to discuss these positive personality characteristics that are universal to the human experience. Each person has a particular configuration of the 24 character strengths spread out over these 6 core categories:

- Wisdom and Knowledge (the cognitive strengths)
- Courage (the emotional strengths)
- Humanity (the interpersonal strengths)
- Justice (the civic strengths)
- Temperance (the protective strengths)
- Transcendence (the spiritual strengths)

FMHCs show clients how to engage their signature strengths in new ways. In doing so, they access previously untapped power for creating healing and well-being and have the opportunity to write their redemptive story.

Through strength-spotting, clients can reach their goals and sustain progress in the five lifestyle categories.

Strength-spotting is one of the best activities to help clients engage their strengths. There are two levels of strength-spotting: spotting strength in the action of others and spotting strengths in the actions of oneself.

By asking questions and sharing observations, Functional Medicine health coaches support clients as they strengths-spot in themselves and others.

QUESTIONS A COACH WOULD ASK:

- How will you use your signature strengths today?
- How will you strengths-spot in others?
- How would you like me to support you?
Eat and Rebuild

FOOD, INFLAMMATION AND CHRONIC ILLNESS

The Functional Medicine approach has been shown to reverse the course of chronic illness and create well-being by addressing underlying root causes. Inflammation, one of the main drivers of chronic diseases can be addressed by reducing or removing these common factors that drive the inflammatory response:

- Environmental toxins
- Potentially harmful foods (see below)
- Stress
- Harmful gut bacteria (and imbalanced gut microbiology)

THE ELIMINATION DIET & DIET DIARY

When recommended by a practitioner, Functional Medicine health coaches support clients through an elimination diet: the 3-week process of eliminating foods that most commonly cause inflammation and systematically adding them back to the diet to expose the connection between specific foods and inflammatory symptoms. These foods include:

- Gluten
- Dairy
- Sugar
- Eggs
- Shellfish
- Corn
- Soy
- Processed Meats

A diet diary used before, during, and after this time helps the client and FMHC co-k create a personalized food plan that greatly reduces symptoms. By seeing the connection between their symptoms and food, clients are motivated to stick with their personalized plan.

PUT IN THE GOOD STUF

To answer the question “What should I eat?” a Functional Medicine Health Coach often collaborates with a client to effect positive change in five categories:

- **Eat the Rainbow**
  Colorful food contains phytonutrients, which play critical roles in maintaining long-term health and fighting chronic illness patterns by supporting the body’s ability to detoxify.

- **Eat Lots of Plants and Choose Quality Protein**
  Look for 100% grass-fed rather than grain-fed meat, Avoid eating animals or animal by-products that have been given antibiotics or hormones.

- **Eat Healthy Fats**
  Omega-3s are vital for healthy brain function, heart health, and have many other benefits. We also need omega-9 fats, which can be obtained in foods such as olive oil and avocados.

- **Eat Fermented Foods**
  Fermented, or cultured foods, such as yogurt, sauerkraut, kimchi (spicy fermented cabbage popular in Korea) and miso (fermented soybean paste), contain probiotic bacteria vital to good health.

- **Eat Mindfully**
  Chew your food, don’t multitask, and identify the emotions associated with eating.
QUESTIONS A COACH WOULD ASK:

● Do you notice any differences in mental clarity or energy level with certain foods?
● Which foods result in feeling calm and contented?
● What went well with your food plan this week?
● May I make a suggestion? How about we look at the restaurant menu and discuss possible choices?
Sleep and Relax

ADDRESS STRESS

Recent research shows that the same stressors can have both a negative and a positive effect on the body, depending on how they’re viewed. At the Functional Medicine Coaching Academy, we teach 4 key ways to address stress.

REFRAME STRESS

The conventional wisdom holds that stress is bad for you and must be reduced or managed. However, there’s evidence that it’s the combination of stress and the belief that stress is harmful that’s dangerous. To facilitate reframing stress, Functional Medicine health coaches explore how adversity makes one stronger. This allows clients a much needed emotional and mental reprieve that can foster continued recovery.

CONNECT WITH OTHERS

While invisibility often goes hand-in-hand with chronic illnesses, online groups such as https://www.patientslikeme.com are taking the isolation out of healing. One of the best ways to transform stress is through the power of social connection.

GET AMPLE REST AND RELAXATION

When we get at least seven hours of sleep each night we’re more likely to resist infections. Sleep deprivation contributes to blood sugar dysregulation, obesity and difficulty losing weight. Our bodies detoxify, repair and restore during sleep.

PRIORITIZE POSITIVITY

Prioritizing positivity is a proactive way of arranging your day so that you have experiences that you know are very likely to make you experience positive emotions.

QUESTIONS A COACH WOULD ASK:

- How are you setting aside time to relax, restore, and find peace and calm?
- May I make a suggestion, what do you think about starting a meditation practice?
- How do you think you can use your strength of X to help you get more sleep and relaxation?
- What kind of activity leaves you feeling refreshed and restored?
- What kind of support do you need to get the right kind of sleep?
- If you were to fit more relaxation and sleep into your schedule, how would you feel? How would you make that happen?
Change Your Mind to Move Your Body

POSITIVE EMOTIONS MATTER

Everyone has heard the adage that exercise is the best medicine. Lack of exercise creates low-grade inflammation, whereas regular exercise can dramatically reduce inflammation. However, many find long-term engagement in exercise unsustainable. They lack enthusiasm or other positive emotions that drive commitment. By pairing physical activity with positive emotions, we not only benefit from the exercise itself, but boost endorphins and other feel-good chemicals, thus increasing the likelihood we’ll do the activity again in the near future.

BELIEFS ABOUT EXERCISE MATTER

If the activity is so far out of our comfort zone that it brings up traumatic memories or elicits excessive negative internal dialogue, is it really helping? Recent research demonstrated that when we believe the movements we’re doing actually help our body, they have a greater impact than when we don’t believe this to be true.

QUESTIONS A COACH WOULD ASK:

- What are your current feelings about exercise?
- What strengths can be applied to starting and sustaining an exercise program? What challenges exist?
- When did you feel better after exercising than before you began? What activity were you engaged in?
- What types of movement brings you joy?
- Do you prefer exercising alone, or would you prefer to have a buddy?
- Would you like to explore group classes?
- Do you become bored with one activity and want to try mixing it up?
How to Use Client-Centered Coaching

WHAT IS CLIENT-CENTERED COACHING

Client-centered coaching stems from client-centered psychology, created by Dr. Carl Rogers. In client-centered psychotherapy, the therapist has no predetermined agenda, but stays with clients and goes where they lead. Similarly, the coach supports and champions change, but only if clients take the lead.

TECHNIQUES OF CLIENT-CENTERED COACHING

Establish Rapport

Being in rapport means the ability to enter into another person’s model of the world, communicating that we truly understand that world in a congruent way. More than simply understanding the client’s experience, establishing rapport involves ensuring they feel understood in their experience of our understanding. Behavioral mirroring, offers of verbal validation and mutual curiosity are all aspects of rapport building.

Use Open-Ended Inquiry

Open-ended inquiry involves asking questions to which the answers are anything but “yes” or “no,” and establishing dialogue as opposed to having a correct or incorrect response. These questions or conversation starters typically start with “What,” “How/How come,” “Tell me about,” or “Describe.”

Become an Ally

In client-centered coaching, the coach takes the client’s side as a way of facilitating the best possible outcome, no matter what happens, no matter what the client does or doesn’t do. Coaches who act as a genuine ally choose to see each of their client’s choices as purposeful, even when the choices aren’t initially understood by the coach.

Create Meaningful Connection

Clients can create stronger ties with family, friends, and even connect with strangers by establishing positive short term interactions. During a high-quality connection, each person tunes in to the other and both reciprocate positive regard and care. As a result, both people feel valued.

QUESTIONS A COACH WOULD ASK:

- What do you want to do?
- What are you ready to do?
- What is the best way for me to coach you?
Step Into Meaning and Purpose

WHY PURPOSE MATTERS:

While diet and lifestyle choices directly impact physical health, we believe the key ingredient for physical and mental well-being consists of finding meaning and purpose.

Research from Dr. Barbara Fredrickson supports the value of hedonic well-being versus eudaimonic well-being. Hedonic well-being centers around positive emotional experiences, while eudaimonic well-being refers to finding meaning in life, believing one has a contribution to make to society, and experiencing life as full of opportunities for growth and transformation.

Fredrickson found that eudaimonic well-being more directly connects to a healthy pattern of gene expression than hedonic well-being. These results were replicated across two different samples using different measures.

USE POSITIVE EMOTIONAL ATTRACTORS:

Positive emotional attractors (PEAs), conceived by Richard Boyatzis of Case Western Reserve University, relates to the personal hopes, possibilities, strengths and optimism that we all possess, while negative emotional attractor (NEAs) evoke fears, shortcomings and pessimism.

When focusing on the personal vision, we arouse parts of the brain associated with imagining and openness to new ideas, people and emotions. Activating these neural circuits activates the parasympathetic branch of the autonomic nervous system (PNS). Turning on the PNS creates relaxation, renewal and restoration, as well as ability to think clearly and express creativity. Thus, focusing on one's ideal future, dreams and personal vision allows for renewal of the body and mind. This process reverses the damaging effects of chronic stress and positively affects sustainability of the change effort.

QUESTIONS A COACH WOULD ASK:

- What gives you meaning and purpose and makes life worthwhile?
- What brings you joy and contentment?
- What would your life be like if you were free of pain?
- Where would you like to be in 5 or 10 years?
- What will you be doing that is different?
- How will you be feeling that is different from the way you’re feeling now?
- How do you think I can help you and what kinds of resources do you need?
Are You Meant to be a Health Coach?

12 COMMON SIGNS YOU’RE CALLED TO HEALTH COACHING

☐ There’s a stack of health and wellness books by your bed

☐ You’ve already told everyone in your family about what foods they can eat to help with their health challenges

☐ One of your most common internet searches has to do with natural remedies for varying symptoms

☐ You’re in the process of healing your own health challenge

☐ You’ve already tried tinctures, teas, and supplements to help create greater vitality in your system

☐ You’re curious about the way the human body works and how it can work better

☐ You spend a significant amount of time “figuring out food” in your life, either for yourself or someone else

☐ You know you want to make a positive difference in the lives of others and you thrive in 1:1 personal interactions

☐ You have the capacity to either “go deep” with someone or encourage others in a way that the people around you have reported is uncommon

☐ You love the idea of seeing people become healthier over time

☐ You want to change lives, particularly when it comes to health

☐ Whether you describe yourself as an introvert or extrovert, you thrive when you’re with people

If 6 or more of these were true for you, we invite you to have a conversation with one of our admissions counselors so you can learn more about an exciting new career as a health coach. We open the doors for enrollment only twice every year. Within 6 months, you could have your first clients.

Wake up and feel inspired every day.

Wake up and feel like you’re making a difference.

Wake up and know you’re fulfilling your purpose.
Enrollment

URL LINK

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