

Tyler Perez; Health Behavior Change Project; Psychology 358; 11/29/17

Helping someone out is an easy task but helping someone change their behavior is a difficult task if it is something you have not done before. When helping someone out you can aid in the task and be their with them and lend a hand, however, when you are trying to facilitate change this becomes difficult as this is now a mental aspect rather than physical aspect. The goal is now how can you help someone reconfigure their thoughts and mindsets about certain activities. Layla Allary and I worked together for the semester and her goal started with losing 20 pounds by the end of the semester but changed to 10 pounds by the end of the semester.

Over the first few weeks we tried to detail out what exactly she wanted to do and what resources are around her to use. When Layla and I first met up she really wanted to lose 20 pounds over the semester and wanted to do so by creating healthy eating habits and working out more consistently through out the week (4-5 days a week). She said she has always done workouts growing up and her family encouraged a fit lifestyle, but her idea now is to find a routine that would give her a complete healthy lifestyle with meditation, nutrition, and exercise. Layla wants to add meditation at the end of the day to help her process goals and to reduce stress. She also wants to start eating more nutritious meals and make meals that will help her lose the weight she wants. The next meeting was a couple weeks later to give time to work on our goals; we discussed how her routine was coming along. She said she had done some minimal meditation but not as much as she wanted to because she was not sure exactly how to approach this but as we got more experience through class she was able to find her meditation routine. Her workouts for the second week were strong and

she worked out five times within three days, after our first meeting, and has kept up with a continuous boxing class every Monday and Wednesday. For her meals she has a meal plan at school but is not sure if this will be helpful in the long run for a healthy diet; she is going to try and cancel this by next week. Layla has found it hard to eliminate desserts but has started to limit or make them smaller portions if she does have any. The third week we met up she had found more of a steady routine and has decided to change her outcome goal. Layla's new goal is now to lose 10 pounds over the semester, she found between school and graduate school applications it is going to be hard to workout as much as she intended. She has still managed to keep up with her kickboxing class twice a week for an hour and added swimming on the weekend for an hour. She has now began to add meditation before bed every night and also thinks of her fitness goals and focuses on herself to stay organized for the next day. She, unfortunately, was unable to cancel her meal plan but now has challenged herself to find healthy alternatives within the cafeteria; she now substitutes fruit for her desserts and allows herself to have one cheat day with small portions of food.

Layla did mention at the end of week 3 she was having some difficulties as she was not seeing too many results even though she had made the changes and found a good routine. I asked her if she had social support and people encouraging her since she was having difficulty in this transition to a new healthy lifestyle. She said her mom, who lives out of the country, has been texting her and kept asking and encouraging her to keep up with the work she had done. Along with this her aunt is starting to send her healthy food ideas to help her with the nutrition part of her plan. This support system made her realize she was not alone and that her mother would be there to help her.

She continued her program into the next week and found that before we met for week four she had lost a total of four pounds.

As we met for the fourth week she had told me about her success in weight loss and trusted her program. Around this time the fires had just occurred and she was derailed from her current routine due to the fires but knew she would be able to get things back together quickly since her recent victory with the weight loss; this achievement helped her find her self-efficacy and she knew this was just an adversity and she could continue on. During the week of the fires she still meditated before sleeping and told herself that she and her friends were safe, which helped her through the difficult time. She was also able to maintain her fitness as she visited her brother down south and it allowed her an area of release. Rolling right into week five, she continued the meditation and began to add stretching to her night routine with a 10-20 minute stretching routine. Another motivating factor for her goal became her graduation dress, which she kept a picture of on her phone. This week she crushed the workout area and did six out seven days with workouts. She did three days of kickboxing and substituted aerobic workouts on the other days with elliptical and treadmill work for an hour and some strength training days focusing on arms and legs for around 30 minutes. She feels she is back on her schedule and knows that her next week will be busy with school and is planning to find times between school work to get some exercise. Heading into week six Layla said she “felt really good about the week”. She had worked out four days of the week with some extra work on certain days. She continued her kickboxing class on Monday and Wednesday and added a 30 minute treadmill and weights session before each day. Her Thursday and Saturday workouts

were an hour or more in length and consisted of machine workouts and aerobic workouts on the treadmill and elliptical machine. She added more stretching to this week since she worked out more and continued her meditation at night. This week she had lost another pound meaning she was halfway to her goal.

Heading into the last two weeks, Layla had difficulty in week seven where she found her schedule to be busy and disrupted by her brother visiting. She did manage to workout twice in her kickboxing class for an hour each day, but she said she had felt weird not working out more for the week. She did, however, keep up her meditation and nutrition routine and focused on having a good week in those areas since she could not workout as much. Going into the last week of meetings she wanted to get back on track and workout three or more times and drink more water to keep her full. In the week leading to our last meeting Layla was working on her graduate school applications and homework for class and was not able to workout as often as she had planned. She did manage to get a half hour session in at the kickboxing class but she said she felt as though it became the same mundane class and was not as fun as usual, she admitted this could be due to the stress this week. She did do her own workout on Sunday with some weights and cardio by using the jump rope. She also managed to balance her food and substituted fruit smoothies for some of her meals and kept to more veggies and less meat this week. She ended up losing another pound, bringing her total to 6 pounds of the 10 she wanted to lose. She said she feels good that she was able to accomplish this much of her goal within three months and believes this project has set her up to continue her routine in the future.

In the end, what I have gathered from this project is that no matter what a person is trying to achieve they will constantly recycle through the stages of change model; pre-contemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, and maintenance. Layla was already in the preparation phase and needed some push and guidance to get to the action phase. What I did to help her was not just offer ideas but to ask her questions about what options are around her to use. It seemed that if she could come up with the idea herself she would adhere to it more. If I did offer further help it would be more of guidance, as in suggesting meals or snacks that I have made in the past or workouts and activities that helped me stay in shape. I also felt by asking her about her support, environment, and outcomes she would then realize what was really around her and helping her. For instance, when I would ask about her environment she would say she has noticed her roommates eating habits, which were not the best, and would try to avoid going out with her to eat all the time or would ask her if she would like to cook with her. Also when asking about her support she would realize how many people were helping her achieve her goal, such as her parents, aunt, and roommate. They all supported her in some way, either by a motivational text or helpful recipes, and she felt more confident in knowing she has people around her that want to help her. Still with all this, routine, goals, support, and environment; she would loop back to the preparation phase some weeks for one of the areas, either fitness, nutrition, or meditation. She would have to reorganize and start a new action phase for that area. This shows how tricky it can be to facilitate behavior change week after week. There are so many factors that contribute to someones daily life and they can easily become distractions, however, if someone can outline their goals, how they will achieve them

and find a form of social support they can easily manage and be prepared to change their life. While Layla had not officially reached her 10 pound mark she is very pleased with her progress so far and believes she will continue with this new lifestyle.

Tyler Perez, PSY 360, Self Mental Skills Training Program

For this assignment we were to create a mental skills program to help us achieve our peak performance goal for the semester. Being an athlete I thought this would be an easy task since I have done this for competitions before, but since my goal was not athletically orientated it was actually a little more challenging than anticipated. My peak performance goal for the semester was to complete my research project for my education class with 16-18 pages and 18-20 citations by May 16. I was not sure how to attack this goal as I had not done a paper this in depth and required so much research and concentration and support. The most helpful strategies were scheduling, goal setting (both long-term and short-term), and support, but there were many other strategies used through out this semester.

For the journal I drew out a calendar for the weeks coming up, which usually consisted of 3-4 weeks. Each day had my work schedule and class schedule and important dates for my research project, which were highlighted. I will be reflecting from this calendar what I did each week and what strategies I used based off what we had learned in class each week. The first few weeks of the semester are always hard for me, as there is a ton of information coming out and talk about projects, along with what is coming up for the whole semester. This becomes overwhelming and takes sometime until I feel settled in and can focus on planning out my weeks. The goal

setting in class was the biggest help as it helped me focus in and get a concrete idea of what it was I wanted to accomplish. Once I knew my goal the next step was to plan out a calendar and start thinking of an idea for my research paper, this was a little stressful at times and I would start feeling that there is too many things to do, but I began using the diaphragmatic breathing techniques to relax and clear my mind. This helped me sort through thoughts and get rid of the unimportant dates that were not even close to happening yet. I also used the breathing technique when I began writing my paper as it helped me relax and focus on the ideas I was thinking rather than getting ahead of myself.

The next step for my performance goal was to complete one of my short-term goals, which was the intro and methods portion of the paper. Once having the overall idea of the paper I began to tackle the intro by outlining and defining the purpose and reason I wanted to study this topic. Before starting the writing I tried the autogenic relaxation to try and get myself in the proper mindset but I felt too relaxed and not focused enough on the paper. If I had to refocus I would use a small task that required little attention such as washing dishes or playing the guitar, which helped me regain focus because it let my mind stop overthinking things. As the semester went on my schedule got busier and harder to manage time between work, class, and the research project.

I began to hit a road block part way through the semester with my second short-term goal, which was finding research for the paper and organizing the research in my literature review to make sense for my topic. I was unsure of what to use and was also stressed by spring break coming up because I would be out of town, driving across the

country to visit my grandparents. I started using support around me by talking to professors and classmates to help me sort out data and existing research that would fit my topic. The support from colleagues and professors helped relieve the stress and organize my paper. Even talking with my parents and friends helped by sorting out details and bouncing ideas back and forth. Before I left I had constructed a good portion of my literature review and only had a few parts to add. I also planned ahead of the trip about days where I could take some hours out of the day and finish the portion I needed to in order to have it turned in by the date required for my professor to review it. Along the way of completing this second short-term goal I used a lot of imagery, as far as, imagining the feeling of completing this portion of the research paper and thinking how well organized I would be after this for the rest of the paper. After turning the literature review in I got great feedback from my professor and felt very pleased that the imagery itself came true.

The next step when returning to school was to prepare and hand out the questionnaire for my data. I knew again I was going to need support from my professors on the questionnaire as I had not constructed one like this before; so before getting to the over stressed part I managed to have ideas set forth and went in to discuss multiple times with professors and coaches about the questions and format I should use. Once I had the questionnaire sorted out I asked the coaches to organize a time with the guys so I did not have to track everyone down. For the part of distributing the questionnaire I had planned and rehearsed a script so I was not bias in my description of the actual questions and also so I was not nervous describing the process to all of the college team.

I have realized towards the end of the semester how hard it has been with my busy schedule and how unorganized things have felt. I know my environment and routines need to be reshaped and cleaned up in order to finish the research paper. For the environment portion I need to clean my room so I have an environment I want to work in or I need to go to places such as coffee shops, like I have done before, where I can spread out a little and see all my data and research. For me, I know a clear space will lead to my best thinking. Second I need to plan a good routine to prepare me for tackling the last parts of the paper. Due to my schedule I have been busy with three to five games a weekend, six to eight practices a week, and homework on top of that. I feel that my planning has been off and my transition between activities needs to improve. I know when I am pressured by due dates I have a mentality where I tell myself "there is no other option but now and I need to sit down and do it". Lately though I have no time in my days and I have to fit in my research paper where I am able to in between games and practices. I have found this transition extremely hard to find my focus. I did not have a routine to start me thinking about my research and was distracted by other thoughts, which would keep me away from my paper for 20-40 minutes. I struggled with setting a routine for a good week or two and finally found that by performing simple tasks for 5-10 minutes that required very little concentration, such as dishwashing, guitar playing, or darts, would reset my mind and clear out all unnecessary thoughts.

As the semester comes to an end and the research paper is close to being due I feel confident in the completion of my goal and that I will achieve it in the perceived time and pages I set. I have finally found my routine, cleaned up my environment, and I

see the finish line in my imagery. I thought this would be an easy task for the semester but have found out more about myself through working on this goal and how I can help myself plan for everyday activities that utilize these skills to prepare me for what ever new task or goals I want to achieve.