

## Individual Counseling – Walking for Fun and Health

### Instruction Sheet

Individual counseling is recommended for participants who are not able to attend regularly scheduled Nutrition Education classes at the local WIC clinic. Individual counseling sessions should always be an option for any participant who prefers to have individualized attention and participants should never be discouraged from meeting their nutrition education contact requirements in this fashion. Individual Nutrition Education counseling is also recommended for WIC clinics that do not offer group Nutrition Education classes due to clinic size or clinic caseload such as clinics in rural communities or “clinics on wheels”.

The first step for conducting an individual counseling session of Walking for Fun and Health is to read the group lesson plan with the title of Walk this Way. Read the entire lesson plan and follow all activities outlined in it.

As noted in the Walk this Way group lesson plan, the objective of this counseling session is to encourage postpartum women to walk to lose any excess weight following childbirth. Exploring the topic of postpartum physical activity with WIC participants should be done while using the Nevada WIC CARES skills:

- Connecting with Families: building rapport with your participants, being friendly and respectful of their opinions and behaviors
- Asking Open-Ended Questions: using open-ended questions that are not judgmental to involve the participant in the nutrition education process
- Responsive Communication: allowing participants to express themselves, giving them enough time to talk and not dominating the conversation, summarizing
- Empowering Participants: seizing appropriate opportunities to make affirming statements
- Support with Follow-Up: work with the participant to determine next steps, plan, or offer a Nutrition Education opportunity that interests the participant

Walking for Fun and Health should be presented to pregnant participants who express interest in this topic either by selecting the “Getting Back in Shape” topic in the Postpartum Circle Chart, by not selecting any physical activity in question 18 of the Postpartum Women Health/Nutrition Questionnaire, or by asking any questions verbally about postpartum weight loss/exercise. Individual nutrition education counseling can be used during a certification or a nutrition education appointment. Please, keep in mind that in nutrition education only appointments you may need to refer back to the nutrition education questionnaire completed by the participant in their previous appointment.

Attached you will find the Walking for Fun and Health. Go over this worksheet with the participant in your counseling session. Use it as a tool to explore the topic and to identify their thoughts and beliefs

on the subject matter. A way of introducing the worksheet would be: “I noticed that you didn’t mark any physical activity in your questionnaire. What kind of physical activities do you engage in most days? (wait for response) I see, so you’re would like to exercise because you want to lose the baby weight but you feel like you don’t have the time to do it. I’d like to talk about this for a few minutes with you, if that is okay with you (wait for response) What have you heard about walking and it’s health benefits? (wait for response and circle any benefits mentioned)”. This is a good opportunity to discover any myths about walking the participant might have heard. Engage in a conversation with her and share the information you have about walking for good health and weight management.

The second question should be use to explore her thoughts on how much walking is considered an adequate amount. Use this opportunity to educate the participant on the daily walking recommendations.

The last question can be used to establish the Next Steps by exploring physical barriers the participant may face when beginning a walking routine. For example: “what kinds of things keep you from walking as much as you’d like to? (wait for response and write answers on the lines provided) Would it be okay if we brainstorm on some ideas that could help you overcome these problems? (wait for answer) after exploring ideas ask participant if it would be okay with her if you see how these ideas workout for her in her next appointment.

Remember to keep this worksheet in the participant’s chart and to follow-up on their next visit to see if any of the ideas explored have occurred or to talk about any barriers or difficulties that may be keeping the participant from engaging in a walking regimen. Remember that we are striving to provide a continuum of care and to empower and support our participants to achieve their own wellness goals.