

# **Sidekix Program Guide**

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## Introduction

### **Why Therapeutic Lifestyle Changes (TLCs)?**

- Initial discussions with field experts and stakeholders led to identifying the TLC model as a promising mode of intervention.
- Research literature
  - Meta Analysis (Dr. Roger Walsh, UC Irvine)
- Mental health professionals have significantly underestimated the importance of lifestyle factors:
  - (a) as contributors to and treatments for multiple psychopathologies.
  - (b) for fostering individual and social well-being.
  - (c) for preserving and optimizing cognitive function.
- Consequently, therapeutic lifestyle changes (TLCs) are underutilized despite considerable evidence of their effectiveness in both clinical and normal populations. \*

The Sidekix Wellness Drop-in Center will demonstrate the value incorporating TLCs into a holistic program for Transition-Age Youth members living with developmental disabilities and co-occurring mental health diagnoses (or those at risk for them)

By focusing on proven interventions across 8 dimensions of the TLC spectrum, Sidekix will be able to serve as a new alternative to the many programs currently focusing on less effective modes of interaction with clients.

\*Source: Walsh, R. American Psychologist 2011

## **Exercise (Move!)**

### **Goals**

- To weave movement into our weekly experience, teach the different ways people incorporate exercise/movement into their daily routines and discover why doing so has a positive impact on overall health & wellness.

### **Topics**

- What is exercise?
- Popular forms of exercise: what they are, how and where to do them.
  - Running, Strength Training/Lifting weights, Biking/Hiking/Outdoor activities, Swimming, Sports, Dancing, Tai Chi, Walking
- Most basic element of Exercise is “movement
- Can be simple changes to daily behavior too! .” Sitting for extended periods of time increases risk of heart disease (64%), certain types of cancer and generally takes 7 years off your life. You can counteract this by simply standing/moving around for 2 minutes (equivalent for ability) once an hour and by getting 30 minutes of “moderate activity” per day (the equivalent of a brisk walk).
  - Park near the back of the parking lot., Stand up to get something vs. rolling in the chair, Walk over to say hi to a coworker or friend instead of calling/emailing them, Take the “long” way around instead of easiest way, Use breaks in video games (ex. end of a level) as a natural break to move around.
- How does exercise make me feel better?
- Talk about everyone’s favorite way to exercise.
- What are some barriers to exercise or reasons we don’t?

### **Activities**

- Every meeting we will have an alarm set to remind us every 20-30 minutes to move around for at least 2 minutes!
- Movement of the week! Every meeting we will learn one new popular form of movement and ways it can be adapted to fit varying abilities and lifestyles.
- Yoga class with instructor.
- Dance class with instructor.

## **Nutrition (Fuel!)**

### **Goals**

- To integrate healthy food options while learning about different ingredients, how they affect our bodies and contribute to our overall health & wellness.

### **Topics**

- What do we currently eat? What are our favorite/least favorite foods? Why?
- What is in our food? Why should I care?
- Daily Serving Recommendations by FDA
- Simple changes to daily diet. Similar to Exercise, improving your diet does not mean having to subscribe to a super-intense regimen or making drastic unsustainable, or impractical changes. There are many simple changes that can have long-lasting, real impact on one's physical and mental health.
  - Portion control
  - Cutting out certain ingredients (white carbs, corn syrup, hydrogenated oils, etc.)
  - Making healthier choices, both meals and snacks (fast food vs. cooking, candy bar vs. fruit, etc.)
  - What are supplements? Why do people take them? What are some examples that are good for the body, brain and mind?
  - Rainbow Diet
- Water!
- What are some barriers preventing us from eating healthy?

### **Activities**

- Healthy vs. less healthy snack of the day
  - Learning about the day's snack options and why there is a "better" choice.
  - Choosing between the two options.
- Practical, Healthy Cooking class with instructor
- Fill in FDA (My Food Plate/Pyramid)
- Serving Size Game

## **Relationships (Connect!)**

### **Goals**

- To learn about how relationships are connected to wellness, what different types of relationships exist & how to communicate in different relationships and protect ourselves from and speak up for ourselves when involved in potentially harmful relationships.

### **Topics**

- Types of relationships.
- Do we have to have relationships?
- What does it mean to have friends, be a friend?
- Communication and relationships.
- Difficult relationships - how to deal with them.
- Love &/vs. Sexuality
- Abuse Prevention, Self-advocacy
- What is the Michelangelo effect
- Social Media, entertainment and its effects on relationships.

### **Activities**

- Group building exercises
- Group interaction, discussion and sharing
- Weekly local/national/world news & events discussion
- Draw/explore our current relationship circles

## **Recreation (Fun!)**

### **Goals**

- To learn different ways to have fun, why it is good for the mind and body and to experience it together as a group and share its effects each week.

### **Topics**

- What do I consider “fun”?
- Do we “need” to have fun? What effect does it have on the mind & body?
  - Lowers obesity, risk of chronic disease (heart, diabetes, cancer, osteoporosis), depression, anxiety, stress
  - Increases life expectancy, quality of life, mood, immune system, self-esteem, life satisfaction, personal/spiritual growth
- What do people do for fun? What is considered “recreation”? Are video games recreation?
- Form of self-expression, independence, autonomy, skill-development
- What are some of our barriers to having fun and how can we adapt?

### **Activities**

- Learn about each other, what do we each like doing for fun?
- Fun activity of the week (try or learn about it, e.g. painting, music, games, puzzles)

## **Relaxation (Mindful!)**

### **Goals**

- To learn what it means to relax, how some people prefer to do it in different contexts, how it effects the body & mind, to experience it together as a group and to share how it makes us feel.

### **Topics**

- How does this differ from fun?
- How does this differ from sleep?
- What are relaxation techniques and why are they worth learning/doing?
- What is stress? Discuss what things trigger stress is our lives.
- What are some barriers to our ability to relax? What changes can we make to help this?

### **Activities**

- Meditation
- Relaxation Technique Instruction led by instructor
- Technique of the Week!
- Talk about how we were able to relax this week, what our favorite ways are to relax
- Talk about the things in life that made us (or is making us) stressed and what we did (are going to do) about it.
- 10 minute massages from therapist (learn about and experience what a massage is).
- Healing power of laughter, joke of the week. Sharing our favorite things that make us laugh.
- Weekly timer during session, reminding us to take a moment to physically and mentally relax.

## **Nature (Elements!)**

### **Goals**

- To learn why spending time in Natural environments is good for the mind and body, how it is possible to do this in the middle of a big city and to experience a piece of Nature every week together whether we bring it in or go out to meet it!

### **Topics**

- What is nature? What is a natural environment? Why is it good for us?
- Why should we care about our environment, what does it mean to say the planet is our home?
- How often do we visit our home – the place we are created to “live” in.
- Effects from living in a world where we have increasing artificial environments?
- Effects on wellness from living more life on the computer, playing video games, watching t.v. vs. interacting with other humans in person
- Are we allowing media to influence our lives too much?
- What are some barriers to spending time in Nature and how can we adapt?

### **Activities**

- Slice of “Nature” Pie (sights/sounds/textures, etc.) each week
  - What studies say about simply looking at pictures or listening to sounds of Nature
- Guest Expert comes to teach group about “Birding.”
- Plants, Animals, Insects – learn about Nature and the environment right around us.
- Animal Therapy
- Just getting some fresh air, taking a moment to step outside.



## **Contribution To Others (Serve!)**

### **Goals**

- To learn why serving others might be something to add to our weekly routines, what it means to do so, to experience service together and share how it makes us feel.

### **Topics**

- What does it mean to “serve” or contribute to others?
- Who should I serve and why? How does this affect my body and mind?
- How do some people do this?
- What are some barriers to our being of service to others and how can we adapt?
- Can groups be of service as well? Could we as a group be of service?

### **Activities**

- Discuss how someone helped us or how we helped someone this week, and how it made us feel?
- Discuss whether it is hard or easy for us to accept help and why?
- Team problem solving: any member may present an issue, problem or question and the team can help them work it out.

## **Meaning**

### **Goals**

- To learn the different ways people of varying cultures view the meaning of life, to learn what our fellow members believe about it, why our understanding of this can affect our health and to experience activities together as a group and share how it makes us feel.

### **Topics**

- What is meaning/spirituality?
- What do different people believe in the world about the meaning of life?
- How could my own belief about this affect my health & wellness?
- Why should I respect other people's beliefs about this and how can I do this?
- What do I think, how do I feel about death?
- What are some barriers we have to engaging this area of life and can we adapt?

### **Activities**

- Meditation (guided by instructor)
- Learning about each other's opinions and understanding about the meaning of life and death.
- "Saying" of the day. Learn about what some well-respected leaders, philosophers, poets and prophets from varying cultures of the past and of today have said about the meaning of life and about some of its truths.
- Where do we turn during the hardest times in life? How do we cope when we go through or hear about tragedies?

## SIDEKIX “Multi-disciplinary Activity” (MAG) Grid

- Each session can include all or some of the activities from each TLC.
- Members choose what they want to do, and help select the day’s activities and topics.
- Each member can decide if, when and how they want to interact with each activity.
- Many activities are multidisciplinary and touch various TCLs.
- Over the course of the program, we can:
  - Map which topics and activities resonate with members
  - Log the frequency and intensity of interaction
  - Keep a running grid to tally program inputs, outputs and ultimately connect to project outcomes.
- By developing and honing in on what members want from each TLC section, we hope to enhance their wellbeing in a way that is:
  - Fluid & flexible
  - Builds on member interest & participation
  - Empowering through self-direction

## **MAG Grid Concept**

