Introduction

• Motivation, like other aspects of exercise, is a personal issue; what works for one client may not be successful for another.

• Developing strategies to keep each client interested and motivated will often be as important as designing the exercise program.
The Challenges of Motivating Clients

• Studies report that drop-outs from standard exercise programs reach 50% or more by the end of the first six (6) months.

• Adherence is defined as the amount of exercise performed compared with the amount of exercise recommended.
The Challenges of Motivating Clients

• There are a number of factors that influence adherence:
  – Personal factors (socio-economic demographics, health status, past experiences with exercise, actual skills, self-confidence, perceptions)
  – Program factors (convenience, cost, challenge factor, effect of program on lifestyle & goals, program length, variety)
  – Additional factors (environmental, rewards, time limitations, support & feedback)
The Challenges of Motivating Clients

- It may be beneficial to have clients complete an exercise confidence survey to determine adherence probability.
Understanding Motivation

• A trainer must view the motivation as a joint responsibility shared with the client.

• The motivation process is dynamic; different strategies may be needed for different clients at different stages in the program.
Understanding Motivation

• The qualities of an effective exercise leader include:
  - Punctuality and dependability
  - Professionalism in dress, behavior, and demeanor
  - Dedication to the exercise training endeavor
  - Willingness to plan ahead for interferences
  - Sensitivity to each client’s past experiences, current preferences, and current & future needs
  - Recognizing signs of burnout and taking steps to prevent or ameliorate it
  - Presenting oneself as a role model
  - Taking responsibility for problems that may arise
  - Forming with each client a partnership in the exercise experience
Understanding Motivation

Methods for enhancing and maintaining motivation to exercise:

1. Structure appropriate expectations at the beginning.

The use of the Borg rating of perceived exertion (RPE) scale can provide an excellent means for evaluating the client’s perception of exercise intensity.
Understanding Motivation

2. Find out the client’s preferences, needs, exercise history, and motivational readiness for exercise change.

3. Work with the client to determine specific types of activities that will best fit the client’s objectives, time, commitments, and personal style.
Understanding Motivation

4. Set appropriate exercise goals.

Goals can be formalized in the form of a contract.

A series of prudent goals should be negotiated by you and your client that focus on building the exercise habit through gradual increments rather than larger changes that, though more appealing to some clients, can lead to failure, frustration, injury, and/or dropout.
Understanding Motivation

5. Whenever possible, offer choices.

6. Remember that exercise, like other behaviors, is strongly influenced by its immediate consequences.

7. Increase the immediately rewarding aspects of the behavior and decrease the negative or punishing aspects.
Understanding Motivation

8. Provide feedback whenever possible.

9. Teach the client how to use prompts and reminders to set the stage.

Examples of prompts may include: write sessions into a daily schedule book, provide the client with a calendar to display prominently, or ready exercise apparel the evening before an scheduled session.
Understanding Motivation

10. Model the appropriate behaviors for the client.

11. Foster self-management of the exercise regimen.
Understanding Motivation

12. Prepare the client for inevitable lapses such as work, illness, vacation, holidays, etc.

By encouraging the client to exercise on his/her own, you will provide the confidence needed to exercise without supervision when a scheduled class must be missed.

Promote abbreviated workouts during busy times.
Understanding Motivation

13. Help clients identify barriers to behavior change, including time constraints and negative moods or thoughts.

14. Create a hierarchy of experiences to enhance your client’s sense of self-efficacy - an individual’s belief or expectation that they are able to behave in a certain manner in a specific situation.
Understanding Motivation

15. Prepare the client for changes in trainers.

16. Utilize as many types of social support as possible.

17. Look for opportunities to promote an overall healthy lifestyle.