

THE OBESITY EPIDEMIC:

a confidence crisis calling for professional coaches



Wellness coaches

A new profession to support our mastery of health and well-being.



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Authors



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Client Testimonial

Since the coaching has begun, I have been able to change my negative outlook to a positive one. Before my coaching sessions, I was so low and so depressed that I could hardly think of anything else.

The weekly goals help me improve my habits and force me to face and accomplish tasks like eating better, exercising, or getting my feelings out. By doing that I can see there are positives in life like wellness, happiness, and peacefulness.

I encourage everyone to try wellness coaching as it actually works.

It makes you well.



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Introduction

While most of us long for better health and well-being, considerable evidence suggests that we're moving in the opposite direction. Consider the paradox – despite continuous media attention devoted to healthy lifestyles, there are now more overweight people than undernourished people worldwide ⁽¹⁾; the situation in the US is particularly serious - a recent study shows that Americans are significantly less healthy and more overweight than Brits at the same age and socioeconomic level ⁽²⁾.

Why do we have this paradox? While obesity is a multifactorial problem, four factors lead us to unwisely choose quick fixes that don't last, and they jeopardize our confidence, what psychologists describe as self-efficacy ⁽³⁾. First, there are the demands of everyday life, which have never been greater. Second, we face a bewildering array of wellness guidelines, products, and services, making it difficult to create a personal formula. Third, there is the challenge of navigating the inevitable obstacles to making changes, including innate resistance and ambivalence. Fourth, many of us have histories of repeated failure. Most of us do not believe that we can master our weight and wellness.

A new profession, wellness coaching, was created to help us master health and well-being, be done with quick fixes, and make changes that last.

Why we need a new profession

The new profession of wellness coaching is arriving at the right time. This white paper was written to describe the new profession, its foundation, and its potential.

Professional coaches have long been recognized for their skills in helping athletes, sports teams, and executives perform at their best. Now, professional wellness coaches are helping change the lives of people seeking lasting improvement in their health and well-being.

We want to be well. We yearn to be in control and feel better. We want more energy. But there is an enormous gap between wanting to be well and the everyday reality of living with the mental and physical health penalties of overeating, under-exercising, and having too little down-time.

We know intuitively what it takes to get well, and that knowledge is now supported by plenty of evidence. Two thirds of health status is driven by our daily choices⁽⁴⁾ – *we are in the driver's seat*. A quote from Tal David Ben-Shahar, Professor of Positive Psychology at Harvard University, is notable: *not exercising is a depressant*.

But knowledge is not enough. Only one in twenty adults engage in five top health behaviors⁽⁵⁾: regular exercise, healthful fat intake, five servings of fruits and vegetables daily, moderate drinking, and non-smoking.

We need to learn a new life skill – how to develop a personal blueprint for well-being, and become confident in our ability to implement it. Most of us don't believe we are able to master this life skill; those of us who consider bariatric surgery face the greatest doubts⁽⁶⁾.

We need a professional competency designed to help people master wellness, which is closely aligned with the new era of consumer-directed healthcare. This is the first time in human history where being the master of one's health, and making health investments daily, is poised to be a dominant societal theme, just as smoking cessation was two decades ago, or sacrificing for the greater good was during World Wars I and II.

The work of Wellcoaches is laying a robust foundation for this new profession, starting with the training of 1,100 wellness coaches and the support of coaching services for thousands of clients over the past four years.

How wellness coaches help us build self-efficacy

The health and fitness industry has been working hard to help us - never before have there been more experts, assessments, resources, guidelines, technology, books, web tools, and beautiful high-tech facilities. The wellness revolution is underway⁽⁷⁾.

Our children are paying the largest price – former U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. Carmona, describes childhood obesity as the “terror within.”

Coach Testimonial

Wellness coaches help clients learn to become better managers of personal health, invest daily in their health bank accounts, increase life satisfaction, and build reserves of energy, resilience, and connection.



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white paper

Coach Testimonial

I work in the acute care hospital setting with cardiovascular patients. Coach training has helped me create an entirely different environment with my patients, which elicits much more information critical to their outcomes. Using a coaching approach has enabled my patients to progress through the stages of change that were never taught in nursing school. My co-workers are amazed with the types of patient conversations I've had using coaching skills rather than the expert approach.



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There is a welcome new emphasis on enabling long-term behavior change, or “changing for good”⁽⁸⁾. New interventions focus on assessing readiness to change for each health behavior, and then tailoring interventions and education to match readiness.

While all of these resources are valuable, we need more. We normally ask experts to tell us what to do, and this approach isn't ideal when we have low self-efficacy⁽⁹⁾. Experts are trained to deliver prescriptions and advice, and often work harder than we do in trying to help us. But the expert approach actually lets us off of the hook, sending the subtle message: *You aren't in charge.*

The expert approach is vital when we are considering surgery. It is not ideal when we want to lose weight or reduce stress. Delegating to experts comes with a price: we are not in control and we aren't asked to work to find our own answers. Building confidence requires new patterns of thinking, doing, and relating.

We also need a shift in emphasis to our strengths and opportunities – building on what's working in our lives, and away from an emphasis on diagnosing and fixing illness - which is in conflict with promoting confidence. It is very difficult to change when we focus on what's wrong and what's not working – too little positive energy and emotion is generated to fuel the pursuit of change.

Moreover, physical and mental health professionals generally train to address one specialty – e.g. exercise, nutrition, or a particular mental or physical health issue. In reality these areas are intertwined. This means that we are called on to integrate information from multiple experts in order to decide what actions to take, and how to prioritize them. This exhausting process is not a recipe for promoting “I can do it!”

Emotional issues trigger overeating, leading to negative self-talk, compromising sleep, causing fatigue, putting exercise out of reach, generating stress, raising blood pressure....and on and on and on....you get the picture.

There are two other important things we need. First, without a heartfelt higher purpose, there is rarely deep and lasting change – we need to connect wellness to what we value most. Second, we need to develop a personal wellness plan that is tailored to our circumstances.

With a focus on building self-efficacy, wellness coaches are trained to:

- accept and meet us where we are today;
- ask us to take charge;
- guide us in doing the mindful thinking and doing work that builds confidence;
- help us define a higher purpose for wellness and uncover our natural impulse to be well;
- help us tap into our innate fighting spirit;
- address mental and physical health together;

Institution Testimonial

Coaching will become one of the most important developments of this decade for the fitness industry. The empowering philosophy of inspiring the client to understand that they have most of the answers within, and the ability for trained coaches to be skilled facilitators instead of directing the client's behavior is a major paradigm shift. Every fitness professional should have education and training in coaching techniques.



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- help us draw a personal wellness blueprint;
- help us set realistic goals; small victories lay the foundation for self-efficacy;
- harness the strengths we need to overcome our obstacles;
- help us view obstacles as opportunities to learn and grow;
- help us build a support team; and
- inspire and challenge us to go beyond what we would do alone.

The foundation of wellness coaching

Mastering wellness and the confidence to sustain wellness is a journey of growth. Wellness coaching delivers a new growth-promoting relationship designed to help us master wellness. A professional coach is our partner in defining "Point B," and designing and navigating the journey to get there through coaching sessions, typically for three months or longer. Coaches don't make it easy for us by giving the answers; they facilitate our self-discovery and forward momentum.

The emerging industry of professional coaching, which began nearly twenty years ago, has until five years ago focused on life, corporate, and executive coaching. Dozens of life and corporate coach training schools and academic programs have trained more than 20,000 coaches worldwide, and recently health and wellness coach training programs have emerged.

Wellness coaching is founded on coaching psychology, the relational sibling of positive psychology, a new and fast-growing field dedicated to the enhancement of well-being: generating more meaning, life satisfaction, and positive emotion, and identifying and building on character strengths⁽¹⁰⁾.

Coaching psychology is vibrant and creative. Today, coaching psychology integrates more than fifteen theories and academic fields. A foundation for coaching psychology research is being built by psychologists and professional coaches in several countries. Wellcoaches has published twice in the annual International Coach Federation Coaching Research Symposium Proceedings.

The outcomes delivered by coaching psychology include:

- Increased self-awareness
- Acquisition of new knowledge and skills
- Attainment of personal and professional goals
- Sustainable behavior change
- Increased life satisfaction
- Increased self-efficacy
- Becoming one's best self

Corporate Testimonial

Within the Methodist Hospital workforce – 10,000 strong - a quiet health care revolution is taking place. In early 2006, wellness coaching using the Wellcoaches model delivered by six certified wellness coaches was added to the repertoire of wellness programs available to all employees, most of whom are overweight or obese. Coaching sessions are face to face and preliminary results indicate that coaching clients are losing weight, making better food choices, exercising regularly, and seeing improvements in biometric measures as well as quality of life indicators.



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We are magnetically drawn to a coach whose “certainty is greater than my doubt.” Adapted from Dave Buck, www.coachville.com

One’s best self includes high self-esteem - *sense of purpose and value to the world* - as well as self-efficacy – *confidence in one’s ability to master that which may be general (well-being) or specific (fitness or weight)*. Coaches help us become more confident, energized, positive, and powerful, and to make lasting change.

Three key components of coaching psychology taught to coaches by Wellcoaches are values, relational skills, and coaching processes.

A. Values shared by coaches

Drawing on humanistic theory ⁽¹¹⁾, coaches believe that clients are whole (not broken and needing to be fixed), creative, resourceful, resilient, and able to gain control of wellness. We are often out of touch with these abilities.

Skilled coaches believe that we are able to figure out what we want and need, and find our way given a safe, non-judgmental, challenging, and invigorating space. This space enables the thinking and feeling work to support self-determination. Aligned with Michelangelo’s quotation “I saw an angel in the stone and I carved to set her free,” coaches help us chip away at layers of clutter to reveal “my best self.”

Professional coaches value our confidence and self-esteem more than their expert knowledge, and skillfully draw out our strengths. Coaches know that they don’t know many of the answers, and they hold a curious beginner’s mind.

B. Relational skills

Relational skills enable coaches to engage, arouse, energize, and challenge us. Relational skills include “being” skills (e.g. mindfulness, warmth, calm, courage, affirmation, and playfulness) and “doing” skills (e.g. active listening, open-ended inquiry, and variety of reflections). Use of these skills in coaching sessions allows the coach to build and sustain a productive partnership with a client over time.

Relational skills draw on relational cultural theory, counseling psychology, and motivational interviewing ⁽¹²⁾. Wellness coaches radiate the relational “being” skills they want us to absorb and own, including deep acceptance, self-respect, courage, playfulness and, most importantly, calm confidence – *you will get where you want to go*.

C. Coaching processes

Coaches employ a variety of coaching processes, often grounded in evidence-based theories. Coaches have in their toolboxes many assessments and processes for fostering a sense of purpose and the formation of a personal vision. There are coaching processes for the creation of plans, and for setting

and reaching goals. The coach also offers expert advice and knowledge at pivotal moments when we truly can't find our own answer – *slicing through the knot with a blade of expert advice*^(13, 14).

Relational flow⁽¹²⁾, the intuitive dance of coaching, is a key expression of coaching mastery. In moments of relational flow, both coach and client are highly engaged, awake, challenged, and stretched to the outer edges of their abilities. It is during relational flow that forward leaps occur.

Several coaching processes draw on appreciative inquiry⁽¹⁵⁾ by eliciting our strengths and increasing positive emotion and energy. Motivational interviewing⁽¹⁶⁾ offers tools to address ambivalence and resistance to change. The Transtheoretical Model⁽⁸⁾ describes the stages of readiness to change, inspiring coaching processes suited to each stage. When we are struggling with weight or other wellness issues, we can be helped up the “readiness” ladder. For example, we can move from pre-contemplation (*I am not ready to think about making a change any time soon*) to contemplation (*I am thinking about making a change in the next six months*) to preparation (*I am preparing to make a change next week*).

Wellness coaches also draw on the new field of positive psychology⁽¹⁰⁾ which has pioneered processes for fostering optimism, hope, and life satisfaction. In addition, traditional psychotherapy models inform coaching processes, including cognitive behavioral therapy⁽¹⁷⁾; reality therapy⁽¹⁸⁾, and choice theory⁽¹⁹⁾. Coaches weave a variety of coaching processes into a unique web for each client; this is the work of a masterful coach.

Drawing from the cognitive and behavioral processes of the Transtheoretical Model, Wellcoaches created a metaphor for wellness coaching: Mount Lasting Change⁽¹³⁾ (Exhibit 1 on next page). The mountain has fifteen footholds that take us to the summit - being one's best self. Thirteen of the fifteen footholds are not about action; they are about thinking. If we prematurely jump into action (to the third level of the mountain), i.e. a quick fix, we proceed on a shaky foundation.

The base level of Mount Lasting Change represents the vision and higher purpose for change. First, we decide to take charge. We then define our best selves. We identify the skills and knowledge we need, and the strategies for using our strengths to overcome our big obstacles. The next level addresses how the vision is turned into a realistic plan, including behavioral goals and our support team, and how to increase confidence. Then a commitment is formalized. The third level depicts the doing process (specific behavioral goals) with early wins and constant fine-tuning. The fourth level represents the approach to sustaining new behaviors.

The top is “my best self.” This is what we yearn to become or uncover through the change process. Arrival to the upper levels (or even moments spent there) is a big cause for celebration.

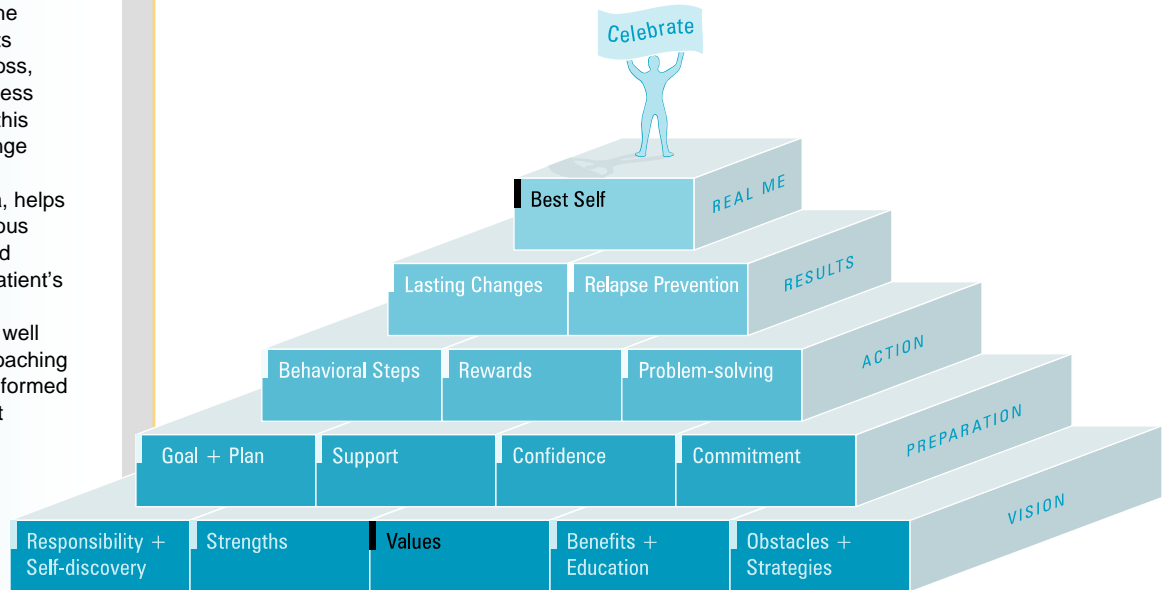
Physician Testimonial

Physicians are challenged by the daunting task of moving patients toward more exercise, weight loss, and stress management. Wellness coaches are welcome allies in this quest. The Mount Lasting Change tool, which I have presented to physicians from Boston to India, helps focus the physician's few precious minutes counseling patients and serves as a road map for the patient's lifestyle change. Addressing physicians' personal health, as well as teaching physicians basic coaching skills are priorities of the newly formed Institute of Lifestyle Medicine at Harvard Medical School.



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Exhibit 1: Mount Lasting Change



The state of psychic chaos around self-care is explained by social psychological research⁽²⁰⁾ which shows that when we are under stress is when we most need to feel better. That need for immediate relief often takes precedence over healthy behaviors. So, when under duress, we head for the fast food *drive thru* window, knowing we can feel relieved in a few minutes. We are looking for quick fixes that help to calm us in the moment, rather than making decisions which serve our best interests. More reason to work with a coach to deal with the cognitive and emotional issues lying beneath our choices, and lay the foundation that enables healthy choices to become habits.

The support of a wellness coach ensures that this “thinking and doing” work is accomplished efficiently, that psychic chaos becomes psychic order, that complexity becomes simplicity, and we become well.

What it takes to become a masterful coach

The International Coach Federation⁽²¹⁾, the leading body worldwide for oversight of the coaching profession and coach credentialing, has set a standard for coach credentialing including at least 60 hours of coach training and 100 hours of professional coaching experience to earn the minimum ICF coach credential of Associate Credentialed Coach (ACC).

One of the few things that gets better with age is our ability to coach masterfully.

Some coaches have reached excellence, not just through training, but because they were born with superior potential, and/or because they had life experiences that enhanced empathy, insight, or courage.

What qualities do masterful coaches possess?

Authentic empathy and complete acceptance come out of their pores. They cannot summon an ounce of judgment. They have a bird dog's ability to sniff out our strengths, values, and desires. They prefer to listen to us rather than talk themselves. They love and enjoy our stories. They see the funny side. They hold up the mirror with courage when necessary. They have the patience to allow us to sit in our muck, even in tears, without rescuing us. They stand for us to achieve more than we believe we can. They take risks to challenge us to reach higher at the right moment. They know that our lives are at stake if we don't take care of ourselves. And they know how to celebrate our successes.

Coaches in training, transitioning from the expert to coach approach, report challenging shifts to:

- Asking questions while not assuming that they already know the answers.
- Not making decisions and judgment calls quickly, and allowing clients the chance to go deeper and get to important stuff.
- Not thinking about what to say next, and instead listening for the thread hanging off of a client's last word.
- Not generating quiet resistance with even a smidgeon of know-it-all energy.
- Reading clients' emotions and working with clients' emotions as the guideposts to the truth.
- Not rushing clients through their "muck," and instead compassionately helping us to sit there until the desire to change gains energy.
- Not being on "automatic pilot" to ensure that a checklist gets completed, and instead being fully present to the client's reality.

Becoming a masterful coach, even for those with natural coaching talents, requires months to years of training, mentoring, and certification, followed by years of practice, more training and mentoring to improve mastery. Learning and growth for coaches never stops, just as for clients – it is a lifelong journey. The coaching industry has barely scratched the surface of the potential for coaches to help us become not only masters of our health and well-being, but masters of our lives⁽²²⁾.

In the healthcare world, it is particularly important that experts - credentialed health, fitness, and mental health professionals - are trained and certified as coaches. "Just-in-time" learning facilitated by an experienced expert is critical to

Institutional Testimonial

The coaching model is a catalyst for the transformation of the medical model to one where physicians work in partnership with highly-skilled health, fitness, and wellness coaches to help people get fit, eat well, and live life to the fullest. ACSM is forming a national coalition to promote physician health, alongside physician education and reimbursement for visits to help motivate patients to pursue healthy lifestyles.



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Coach Testimonial

I have a master's in psychology, which can lead me to relate to people from an "issue standpoint." Yet, not everyone is open to digging deep into the past, nor is it always needed. So that is where wellness coaching becomes an effective alternative.

One theory is absolutely refreshing - called Appreciative inquiry! New found energy and confidence arises when I ask people to focus on "what is working now?" Sometimes they ask me to repeat myself, since they are so accustomed to focusing on the problem, or "dark side" of things. By supporting people to identify and stay connected to their strengths, I am asking them to come back into their light. This is where empowerment lies.



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Therapists generally help people who are seeking relief from psychological or emotional wounds or crises, while coaches are partners in helping people who are ready to define a better future, and then navigate the path to get there.

making lasting change. Some view coaching as the most sophisticated form of teaching. Masterful coaches bring to coaching partnerships years of experience, and a wealth of knowledge (reflecting their specialties), as well as their command of multiple areas of well-being.

To be a credible wellness coach, s/he must walk the wellness walk and be an excellent role model. This doesn't imply perfection: rather coaches must actively work on their own wellness in order to be in integrity with their roles.

Most would agree that, while mastery of wellness is one of our highest priorities, managing weight, fitness, and mental health are among our greatest life challenges, especially today when the environment is stacked against us. As we age, the challenges get more complex. Helping those of us whose spirits are buried under one hundred pounds or more of extra weight and haven't moved our bodies with vigor for a long time is perhaps the toughest arena the world of professional coaching faces today. It is wise then to seek out coaches who have the best training available.

Coaching and therapy

Many therapists are weary of talking about illness; they want to help clients to improve wellness. Masters and PhD psychologists are becoming life coaches or wellness coaches because the coaching model is more positive, energizing, enjoyable, and satisfying than the therapeutic approach of focusing on resolving problems and revisiting the past. Therapist coaches report a higher sense of self-efficacy in their coaching work than they do in traditional psychotherapy, where they often second-guess their work. Therapists find that more people are responsive to coaching and there is a growing demand for coaching services ⁽²³⁾.

Comparisons between coaching and therapy are often oversimplified; the process of psychotherapy cannot be neatly compressed into a few sentences. Neither can the process of coaching. Here are some general principles.

One major difference between therapy and coaching is that therapy treats DSM-IV diagnosable disorders; coaching does not. Coaching assumes that clients are already doing some things well in their lives and wish to do better or to develop in other dimensions.

Most people who are struggling with wellness are facing intertwined psychological and physical challenges that lead to ambivalence, or chronic contemplation. However, therapists generally don't address physical health (eating, exercise, weight, health risks) which is not ideal.

In addition to physical health, wellness coaches address our mental health, drawing on positive psychology, to help clients develop self-acceptance, a positive mindset, self-efficacy, more happiness and life satisfaction, as well as

Coach Testimonial

My coach training has taught me about the psychological issues behind achieving wellness goals. As a personal trainer, I was frustrated because very few of my clients would take personal responsibility for their health and wellness. Through coach training, I have learned how to help my clients find their motivation and confidence to maintain the habits needed to achieve their wellness goals. I now have clients who exercise on their own, take responsibility for their own wellness, and are sustaining changes that last.



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the skills of courage, resilience, and tenacity. The exploration of emotional energy leads to breakthrough insights, and galvanizes action.

Coaches help those of us who have morbid obesity unravel a complex tangle of cognitive and emotional issues we need to address for both personal growth and managing weight ⁽²⁴⁾.

While coaching can deal with mental health effectively, in some cases psychological wounds go too deep, or human functioning is severely compromised by psychopathology. Coaching commonly uncovers emotional wounds and ignites the motivation to heal wounds with the help of traditional therapists.

Why wellness coaching should be consumer-driven

In the past decade we have witnessed the explosive popularity of personal training, which is energetically consumer-driven, demonstrating the potential for wellness coaching. Today more than 200,000 personal trainers serve a multi-billion dollar market in the US alone. At the same time, professions with health care credentialing and referrals, including dietitians, psychotherapists, and physical therapists, have a dramatically lower consumer appeal.

Just as for personal training, services delivered by masterful wellness coaches are appealing and valuable, and will flourish as a consumer-driven service. Coaching is most effective when we want to take charge, and are ready to invest - money, time, and effort - over the short and long haul to master wellness. The perceived value can be downgraded when coaching is provided at no charge.

Twelve themes Wellcoaches coaching clients cite as the reasons they invested in working with a wellness coach

- 1. Quick Fixes Over** – I was done with quick fixes and now I'm focused on making *changes that last*.
- 2. Precious Asset** – I decided that health is my most *precious asset* and now I invest for the long term.
- 3. Get off the Fence** – I was fed up with sitting on a fence and now I have committed to a wellness path.
- 4. It's not about Weight** – I realized that it's *about wellness* and not weight.
- 5. Be the Boss** – I want to be the *boss* of my health and wellness and quit delegating responsibility to others.
- 6. Health Style** – I want to develop my unique *health style* rather than use one-size-fits-all approaches.
- 7. Mental Game** – I know *what* to do and decided to master the mental game - turning intention into reality.
- 8. Peak Performance** – I recognized that to reach peak performance at home and work, I need peak wellness.
- 9. Big Picture / Small Steps** – I knew that an extreme makeover wasn't the answer and I chose to take small steps which are powerful.
- 10. Confidence** – I was finished with self-doubt and I now focus on building confidence in my ability to master wellness.
- 11. Winning the Wellness Game** – I decided to focus on winning the wellness game and not losing or quitting things.
- 12. Close the Gap** – I have closed the gap between where I am and where I want to be when it comes to my health and well-being.

Corporate Testimonial

WellCorp, a health management provider, requires all coaches to obtain a wellness coach certification because we believe the Wellcoaches coaching model best supports our growing coaching client base of over 100,000 covered lives. Positive feedback is plentiful. One client said "Our conversations were as enjoyable as much as therapeutic. Your unassuming demeanor and soft-handed coaching was quite appealing to me and allowed my ideas for cholesterol reduction to either fit my lifestyle or fall by the wayside. You maximized the opportunity for success for me. That's great coaching in my experience."

We are also seeing results. Clients are making changes (losing weight, reducing stress, quitting smoking) and feeling good about the process. One client asked for help to get him past his weight loss plateau. His wife joined the coaching sessions – a missing puzzle piece. The focus has expanded beyond eating and weight, to spending more time together. This is making a significant difference for both of them and he is moving past his plateau.



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In fact, wellness coaching has the opportunity to be the first profession to straddle both worlds: a consumer-driven service in partnership with health care credentialing and co-investment.

It is best to view working with a wellness coach as a valuable investment which delivers the health and well-being we need to:

- be at our best at home and work;
- enjoy our wealth, or earn it; and
- reduce health risks and costs in the short and long term

How do coaches reach clients in all socioeconomic groups? Online self-coaching, group (and family) coaching, and community coaching, are cost effective models which will take the power of coaching to everyone.

The value of laser coaching (call center models)

Many organizations are deploying health, wellness, or lifestyle coaches using a call center or on-site format to support brief interventions. These "laser coaches" apply basic communication, educational, and behavioral modification skills in short (10-15 minutes) telephone or in-person conversations. Increasingly, these coaches get basic training in motivational interviewing, readiness to change assessment, and coaching skills.

Laser coaching is a helpful resource, provided at no charge, which serves those who are ready to learn, or need a short intervention to break a log jam, or who have done a lot of the thinking and doing work. Occasionally, laser coaching triggers life-giving breakthroughs. The impact is enhanced when a client works for an organization whose leaders are role models, providing cultural permission for mastery of well-being.

Laser coaches are well-positioned to refer to wellness coaches clients who need:

- a growth-promoting partnership to deliver the new life skill of mastery of wellness; or
- to address physical and mental health together; or
- comprehensive help to work through the breadth and depth of issues underlying wellness.

Conclusions

The emerging profession of wellness coach promises to deliver mastery of health and well-being to many of us who are struggling. In summary:

- Most adults and many children are struggling with a declining quality of life and face financial risks related to overeating, under-exercising, and demanding lives.
- Most of us want to be well but are stuck because we lack confidence in our ability to change.
- Our reliance on experts telling us what to do is undermining our confidence (or self-efficacy).
- We need a partner who focuses on strengths and opportunities, rather than on illness and risk, which doesn't deliver the positive foundation for personal growth.
- We need to work with professional coaches who are trained in coaching psychology and deliver growth-promoting partnerships, which ask us to do the work required to support self-efficacy. Other coaching outcomes include self-discovery, goals performance, learning, behavior change, and becoming one's best self.
- The best trained and skilled wellness coaches are able to help us deal with the complex tangle of mental and physical health issues in an integrated fashion.
- Therapists are becoming coaches because they find that the coaching model is more energizing, effective, and appealing than traditional therapy for many clients, while coaching uncovers emotional wounds and ignites the motivation to heal wounds with the help of traditional therapists.
- Laser coaching (or call center coaching) is a valuable service, and laser coaches are well-positioned to refer to wellness coaches when clients need to work at deeper levels to support self-efficacy, and to address mental and physical health together.
- The phenomenal growth in popularity of personal training, now a multi-billion dollar market, demonstrates the potential for wellness coaching as an appealing consumer-driven service, in partnership with credentialing and co-investment by the healthcare industry.
- The best professional health and wellness coaches should be mobilized to help those of us who are struggling with obesity, a wellness crisis and one of life's greatest challenges.

We look forward to the day when the norm is that we take charge of our health and invest in it daily for the long term, rather than pursue quick fixes. And just as we meet with a financial planner at least once a year, we meet with our personal wellness coach to develop a wellness plan, which we update regularly, discuss with our physicians, and share with families and friends who make up our support team.

Coach Testimonial

The steps to wellness are supported by our natural inclination for health, our birthright. The work of the coach is not to make people healthy, but to make people attentive to their own life-giving urges and supporting relationships. Coaches assist people to move in healthy directions, realizing their full potential.



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Institution Testimonial

CMSA most certainly believes coaching skills are valuable to the case manager and the case management process. Our Case Management Adherence Guidelines incorporate coaching skills to improve effectiveness and our members report coach training as a real asset. CMSA believes there is a place for health coaching in the collaborative practice model, and looks forward to case managers and health coaches working collaboratively.



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Future white paper topics

- 1 Evidence-based theories and models which contribute to the new field of coaching psychology.
- 2 How the principles of coaching psychology can be implemented widely by healthcare professionals to support mastery of well-being, decrease healthcare costs, and improve energy (productivity).
- 3 Physician coaching models to catalyze the motivation and forward movement by patients to master healthy lifestyles.
- 4 How coaching models can address organization-wide mastery of wellness.

When we work with good coaches, we say:

My coach is good.

When we work with great coaches, we say:

Wow - I am good.

Client Testimonial

My coach has a unique approach for helping people with their fitness, nutrition, and wellness issues. She has helped me to set goals and at the same time to achieve those goals over time with her positive approach backed by her extensive resources. I have learned that fitness can be looked at as a way of life and is a choice.



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Client: Barbara Feldman, Aspen, CO

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Corporate Testimonial

Kronos delivers group weight loss coaching programs onsite for corporate clients based on the Wellcoaches model. One important metric that Kronos follows is the change in coaching client confidence level in mastering weight management before and after a coaching program. Dramatic results include a decrease in those with **not confident** ratings from 76% to 0% and an increase in those with **confident** ratings from 24% to 95%.



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Appendix 1: Coach survey of key white paper conclusions

We surveyed 144 coaches in the Wellcoaches community to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with the main conclusions of this white paper. The coach contributor names, states, and email addresses are listed in Appendix 2.

Key White Paper Conclusions	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree
Many people are struggling to master health and well-being due to inadequate self-efficacy	2%	1%	96%
Many people tend to tell themselves in at least one area of wellness something along the lines of - "I can't change. I'm not in charge. I'm not in control. I'm not the master of my health and well-being (or one area) and I want to be!"	3%	4%	93%
Many people seem to be stuck in chronic contemplation in at least one area of wellness.	2%	3%	95%
We minimize the promotion of client self-efficacy when we assume the expert role as our primary approach.	4%	7%	89%
One needs to be a highly skilled coach in order to be masterful at promoting self-efficacy with clients who are struggling with health and well-being.	8%	12%	80%
Short coaching sessions don't allow coaches and clients to create the partnership that allows them to engage in powerful coaching conversations which address the important issues and provide a foundation for growth and change.	13%	20%	67%
Highly trained and holistically skilled coaches can help clients address mental health issues (e.g. positive mindset, confidence), related to obesity and other self-destructive health behaviors.	1%	9%	90%
Coaching people who are overweight, sedentary, and stressed is the toughest arena the world of coaching faces today.	11%	14%	76%
It is wise to not underestimate what it takes to train and mentor coaches to be successful at helping people master wellness.	2%	1%	96%
My coach training has significantly improved my ability to help clients build self-efficacy.	3%	4%	93%

Coach Testimonial

Sometimes as the coach one must internalize and KNOW that change will happen for your clients until they have successes that allow them to start believing in their own self-efficacy. A coach's unwavering and pervasive confidence is a lifeline, especially since clients are on their own most of the time.



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Appendix 2: Coach contributors

The 144 coaches from 35 states and three countries (USA, Canada, UK) listed below contributed to a survey on the conclusions of this white paper.

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Coach Testimonial

Wellness coaching grounded in evidence-based theories enables the client to maintain his/her rightful place in the driver's seat throughout the coaching relationship.



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Coach Testimonial

I realize that I am not the expert in creating self-efficacy in my clients: they are. Wellness coach training has provided me the tools to allow them to see that. I am the architect....they are the builders.

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