Group Interventions
Dyersville Experience (example)

- 450 participants lost a combined 7,500 pounds
  - Each week, entire team stepped onto a giant truck scale to monitor their progress
- WHY did this group intervention work?
Long-term consequences

- Group based interventions are effective in the short term but what happens when the class or program ends?
  - Do the clients stop exercising or regain the weight?
  - Do the clients PA behavior regress?
- Group programs maintain a higher rate of PA after the program then traditional one-on-one exercise programs.
What makes a successful group interventions?

- High level of cohesion is related to greater adherence.
  - Fostering cohesion in the group.
- Perceived and social support
  - Foster social support in the group.
- Type of the exercise leader
  - Socially enriching leader
- Size of the class is related to greater adherence
  - Small and large classes
Group Cohesion Effect

- Alan (2003) demonstrated that connection is what brings old adults to a group exercise experience.
- Group classes that are taught from a student-center perspective with an emphasis on cohesion enhances adherence (Carron, et. al., 1998).
- Heinzelmann & Bagley (1970) reported 90% of adult participants in an exercise program preferred to exercise in a group setting.
- Group exercise produces higher rates of exercise maintenance (Massie & Sheppard, 1971).
- Seniors believe they have a better exercise experiences in groups (Carron, 1999)
- Developing a highly cohesive group focused on the exercise task and the outcomes it can produce relates directly to high exercise compliance (Carron et. al., 1996)
What are some ways we can increase cohesion & Social Support?

• Gender makeup
  – Women often report that they feel uncomfortable in exercise groups where male exercisers are in the majority (Benson, Arthure, & Rideout, 1997)
  – Men seem not to care

• Similarity of oneself to other group members
  – Obese people prefer exercising with other obese people (Bain, Wilson, & Chailkind, 1989)
  – People generally want to exercise with others of similar abilities.
What are some ways we can increase cohesion & social support?

• Socially enriching versus bland groups
  – Groups that involved participants that were enthusiastic, encouraged each other, and socially interacted experienced greater adherence.
  – Novice participants may not like the socially enriching environment and prefer first to master the exercise skills.
What are some ways we can increase cohesion and social support?

• **Buddy system**
  – Pair a experienced participant with inexperienced participant

• **Environmental factors**
  – Music needs to be enjoyable
  – Temperature affects the clients mood, fatigue, and tension (Hansen, Stevens, & Coast, 2001)
What are some ways we can increase cohesion and social support?

• Gym mirrors or no mirrors
  – Highly active women report greater feelings of self-efficacy when exercising in front of a mirror.
  – Inexperienced exercises prefer not! (Martins, Ginis, Jung, and Gauvin, 2003)

• Class size
  – Participants in small classes expect more individual attention and reinforcement.
  – Participants in large classes expect a leader who address attention and reinforcement to whole group not individually (Carron, 1990)
What are some ways we can increase cohesion and social support?

• Family, spouse, and parental support
  – Provide opportunities for the spouse to participate
  – Child day care centers
  – Pestroying a love one to exercise may result in behavioral reactance, that is, doing the opposite.
What are some ways we can increase cohesion and social support?

• Each PA groups must be made distinctive (foster feelings of distinctiveness)
  – Group name, group T-shirt
• Have the individuals be given the right to choose
  – Intensity, duration, and goals of program
  – Vary the duration and time of your workout session based on the clients
• Have each experienced group member spend time helping new members
  – New members will learn individual sacrifice, techniques necessary for participation in the class, and gain skill
• Establish Common Goals
Your Viewpoint

• Formal and informal groups
  – Structured with a leader delivered by a PA resource where you enroll.
    • Members adhere to the leader-directed activities
    • Members role is as a participant
  – Unstructured where a group in the neighborhood decide to walk early each morning?
    • Members adhere to the norm of the group
    • Members role is flexible

• Which type do you think is the most effective? Why or why not?
Exercise Leader & Group Intervention Effect
What are some ways we can increase social cohesion and group support?

• Westcott (1991) indicated that participants rated knowledge as the most important characteristic of a fitness instructor.

• Recently Kennedy (2004) reported classes named “turbo”, “ulimtate”, “high intensity”, “high impact” were not attended.

• Knowing your participants was directly related to adherence in the group
Key Exercise Leader Skills

- Understanding of muscle balance
- Proper warm-up and stretching
- Prove movement options and verbal cues
- Beginning intensity within the exercise session
- Demonstrate methods of monitoring intensity during cardio segment
- Use different choreographic techniques
- Know step training, kickboxing, stationary indoor cycling, and water exercise.
- Have alternative expertise; such as yoga or pilates; weight training; etc.
- Provide multiple muscle group modifications,
- Type of positive music
- Demonstrate exercise with proper form and alignment
- Know a variety of flexibility exercises appropriate for the target group
- Understand relaxation and deep breathing techniques
- Be able to teach low and high impact classes
- Create smooth transitions in the session
Creating a Positive Group Environment

• Introduce yourself to the class and have them introduce each other.
• Cite the purpose of the workout and what will happen during the workout
• Wear attire and footwear that fit the population.
  – E.g., seniors do not wear spandex
• Explain the class format and what is expected.
• Give positive cues, that is, smile, be energetic, etc.
• Demonstrate frequently
• Provide feedback frequently throughout the workout and program
The End