

## Lesson 6

# Staying Physically Healthy During the COVID-19 Crisis

### Beginning

- What were the main points from our last lesson/call/meeting?
- Did you complete any action steps since that lesson/call/meeting?
- If so, how did they go?
- Today's lesson is "Staying Physically Healthy During the COVID-19 Crisis". What do you know about staying physically healthy generally and especially during this crisis?
- Why is this an important topic?
- Today we're going to talk about having a healthy lifestyle generally, things to do to stay healthy during this crisis, and the connection between a healthy lifestyle and mental health recovery. Let's begin by discussing some important information.

### Important Information

#### *What is a healthy lifestyle?*

A healthy lifestyle refers to making choices and taking actions that keep you physically and mentally fit. A healthier lifestyle can prevent or improve many serious health problems, such as diabetes, high blood pressure and asthma. A healthy lifestyle includes the following actions:

- Get regular medical check-ups.
- Manage physical health problems (for example, diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol).
- Find ways to relax and have fun.
- Maintain good personal hygiene.
- Exercise regularly.
- Eat healthy meals and manage your weight.
- Get a good night's sleep.
- Avoid unhealthy activities (for example, drinking, smoking, using street drugs, unsafe sex)

#### *Why is a healthy lifestyle important?*

- People can improve their physical health in ways that support their mental health and recovery.
- People benefit from information about their own physical health and take steps to improve it.
- Poor physical health takes energy away from activities that support your recovery.
- Good physical health helps you to better manage stress and other life problems.
- An unhealthy lifestyle could make your mental health problems worse.
- A healthier lifestyle may help relieve problems, such as depression and anxiety.

#### *What can you do to protect yourself during this crisis?*

We covered this topic in lesson 1, and it is so important that we will review it again now.

Experts recommend that for now, we practice “social or physical distancing”, which means staying six feet or more from others when possible. This is why many mental health programs, schools and many businesses are now closed or reducing the hours that they are open. As we learn more about this virus and see fewer people infected with it, these restrictions will be reduced.

There are other things that you can do too, when possible:

- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds often, especially after being in a public space or coughing or sneezing
- If you don’t have soap and water, you can use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol
- Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands
- Especially avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Cover your mouth and nose with a mask or face cover when around others
- Cover coughs and sneezes

*What to do if you think that you are sick*

- Talk to your counselors, care managers, or prescribers as soon as you can
- If you are sick, or thought to be sick with COVID-19, you will be asked to separate yourself from other people for a while (this is called a quarantine). You may be given some medicine to help with the symptoms. If the symptoms become very severe, you may be taken to a hospital for care.

*Mental health benefits of living a healthy lifestyle*

- Helps people avoid situations that may trigger a relapse (for example, drugs or alcohol, unsafe sex)
- Reduces depression and worry
- Reduces stress
- Gives a person more energy to pursue goals
- Keeps a person’s mind active and clear
- Helps manage side effects of medication

### Let’s Get Personal

How are you currently protecting yourself from COVID-19 and what other things would you like to do in the future (starting today!)? Please check the boxes that apply to you.

STRATEGY	USING NOW	WILL USE STARTING TODAY
Practicing social or physical distancing when you can – staying six feet or more from others when possible		

Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds often, especially after being in a public space or coughing or sneezing		
If you don't have soap and water, you can use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol		
Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands		
Especially avoid close contact with people who are sick		
Cover your mouth and nose with a mask or face cover when around others		
Cover coughs and sneezes		
Other		

Action Step

Choose a strategy to protect yourself from COVID-19 starting today.

Strategy: \_\_\_\_\_

What will be your first step? \_\_\_\_\_

When? \_\_\_\_\_

Where? \_\_\_\_\_

How will you remind yourself to do it? \_\_\_\_\_

Who could help you complete your Action Step? \_\_\_\_\_

What might get in the way of completing your Action Step and how can you deal with this?

Ending

- What were the main points of this lesson?
- How do you feel about what we have covered today?

- Consider using this affirmation, or one of your own choosing:

**AFFIRMATION: You might find it helpful to affirm (state out loud) your ability and motivation to apply what you have learned to improve your health and wellbeing.**

*I have the knowledge and determination to use what I learned to stay physically healthy during this Covid-19 crisis. I will use this knowledge to make smart decisions that will help me stay physically healthy. I am a worthwhile person who deserves to have the information needed to take care of my physical health and stay safe during this difficult time!*