



Social and Physical Activation

Research has shown that increased activity leads to decreased depression, so increasing socialization and physical activities are incorporated into the PEARLS program. During each session, the counselor works with participants to increase engagement in social and physical activities. The counselor assists participants to develop a program of social and recreational activities inside or outside the home, encouraging them to use existing community resources. Participants are also assisted to develop a regular physical activity program, with activities consistent with their physical capabilities and preferences. In some cases, an activity may be as simple as going out to get the mail on their own, rather than having a caregiver perform that task, or lifting soup cans for 20 repetitions. The key is to help participants select activities they feel confident they will be able to do.

Pleasant Activity Scheduling

Engaging in pleasant activities has also been found to reduce depressive symptoms. During each session, the counselor encourages participants to select an activity they would enjoy – a pleasant activity they can do as “homework.” For participants who have been caregivers for others for many years, it may be difficult to think of a pleasant activity. For this reason, the **PEARLS Training Workbook** includes a sheet of over 200 possible activities, with choices as diverse as gardening, looking at pictures of grandchildren, or taking a bath [Form #10]. The activities may, but do not necessarily, involve other people or going places; counselors may want to encourage participants to consider activities they can do on their own. These three elements – PST, Social and Physical Activation, and Pleasant Activity Scheduling – *work together* to empower participants by encouraging them to engage in behaviors that help them reach their goals. Participants are urged to continue with the approach on their own after the sessions have ended; brief follow-up calls by counselors encourage participants and support their transition to continue on their own.

EXERCISE: Stay in dyads and reverse the roles with one person role playing the older client and the other the PEARLS counselor. The counselor will ask questions to elicit client-centered decisions and record them for:

1. Select one social or physical activity for the following week.

2. Plan one pleasurable activity or event for the following week.

DISCUSSION:

Group as a whole will discuss barriers and facilitators to the process.

Description of interventions taken directly from:
PEARLS Training Workbook, Seattle, Washington