

STRATEGY

Social Support for Physical Activity



OVERVIEW

This strategy provides a supportive environment for individuals attempting to increase and sustain regular physical activity. Social support interventions for physical activity can focus on existing social networks or creating new social networks. Such interventions might aim to increase social support within the family (targeting the family as a whole, the parents, or the spouse/partner), the faith community, the worksite, or other community-based sectors. Techniques regularly used in social support interventions include group-oriented goal setting, problem solving, discussion, and physical activity opportunities or events.

Supported by:

- [The Community Guide](#) by the Community Prevention Services Task Force

Settings:

Community (Church), School (including University), Worksite

EXAMPLES



A **school-based** intervention targeted children at high-risk for cardiovascular disease and their families. Parents participated in a 12-week education program covering topics such as healthy eating and exercise, and utilizing behavioral support strategies.



A **community-based** intervention targeting physical activity among older women recruited volunteers to serve as exercise leaders. Exercise leaders organized a regular walking group and social events that included physical activity opportunities for members of the walking group.

Research-Tested Intervention Programs ([RTIPs](#))



[New Moves](#) is a program for adolescent girls designed to promote behavioral changes, including healthy eating and physical activity, in a supportive environment that is accepting of different body types. New Moves is administered in a **school** physical education class over the course of a school year.



The [PHLAME \(Promoting Healthy Living: Assessing More Effects\) program](#) promotes heart health among **firefighters** using a peer-led, team-centered curriculum and a counselor-led intervention. The program promotes healthy eating habits, regular physical activity, and appropriate body weight.



The [StrongWomen – Healthy Hearts program](#) is a **community-based** intervention designed to reduce cardiovascular disease risk in sedentary midlife and older women who are overweight or obese. The 12 week curriculum includes both physical activity and dietary components.



[Planet Health](#) uses an interdisciplinary curriculum, infused into regular **school** subjects, to improve activity and dietary behaviors among 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students. The program is delivered by classroom teachers to all students, not just those who are obese, and includes both nutrition and physical activity components.



[Coordinated Approach to Child Health](#) addresses eating habits, physical activity, and cigarette smoking among 3rd to 5th graders in diverse communities. The program is comprised of family-based and **school-based** curricula, implemented by classroom teachers.

TRT REVIEWED INTERVENTIONS

- [Arkansas Healthy Employee Lifestyle Program](#) for worksites
- [Color Me Healthy](#) for childcare and preschool settings
- [Eat Well Play Hard](#) for childcare settings
- [Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care](#) (NAP SACC)
- [Trailnet: Healthy, Active, Vibrant Communities](#)

RESOURCES AND TOOLS



COMMUNITY

- [Healthy Women Build Healthy Communities](#) (Bright Futures for Women’s Health and Wellness, United States Department of Health and Human Services)
This toolkit helps women plan, execute, and evaluate a physical activity and/or healthy eating event in their community. The toolkit emphasizes social support and is based on 10 Building Blocks which provide guidance, resources, and examples. The Administrators Handbook has additional assistance and materials to accompany the toolkit.
- [Active Bodies, Active Minds: Healthy Habits](#) (University of Washington Center for Public Health Nutrition)
This site offers posters, activities, and handouts for families seeking to increase physical activity, decrease screen time, and develop healthy habits. All resources are offered in English and Spanish.



WORKSITE

- [Workplace Physical Activity Framework](#) (Alberta Active Living Strategy)
Alberta’s Workplace Framework serves as a blueprint for developing and maintaining workplace physical activity programs. The tool is divided into three phases targeting the workplace at multiple levels. It is intended for use with the Audit Tool (included).

REFERENCES

The Community Preventive Services Task Force. (29 March 2012). The Guide to Community Preventive Services (The Community Guide) Retrieved April 24, 2012, from <http://www.thecommunityguide.org/index.html>.