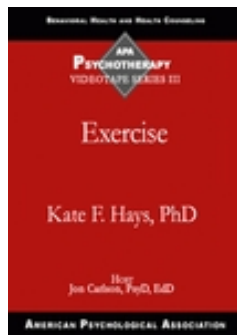


Get Moving

A review of the video



Exercise

with Kate F. Hays

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\$99.95



Reviewed by

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Those who do not find time for exercise now will have to find time for illness.

—Earl of Derby (1873)

Creating a healthy mental and physical lifestyle is one of the great challenges of the 21st century. We have heard many times about the importance of exercising and eating well, yet many Americans continue to overeat and live sedentary lifestyles that are resulting in record levels of obesity, chronic disease, and mental health problems (Centers for Disease

Control and Prevention, 2005). In addition to the well-known positive benefits of exercise for physical health, there is now clear evidence that regular exercise is an effective intervention for common mental health problems, such as anxiety and depression (Babyak et al., 2000; Martinsen, 2005; Tkachuk & Martin, 1999). These findings create new opportunities for psychologists to broaden their scope of practice and provide important interventions that benefit both mental and physical health problems, particularly in primary care settings, where they are most often treated (Frank, McDaniel, Bray, & Heldring, 2004).

The video *Exercise*, with Kate Hays and host Jon Carlson, provides psychologists and other mental health professionals with an opportunity to watch a skilled and seasoned psychologist help a healthy young woman explore the barriers and issues affecting her regular exercise program. Hays is an internationally known psychologist in the area of exercise and sports psychology. She has published numerous highly regarded articles and books in this area (Hays, 1999, 2002).

The videotape provides a contemporary view of one woman's struggle with maintaining a successful exercise plan and of how to overcome the barriers to achieve a potentially positive outcome. Although the client is not suffering from any apparent mental health problems, through Hays's skillful interviewing we clearly see the psychological issues and barriers that are interfering with the client's achieving her exercise and weight goals. The videotape is organized into three parts: explanation of the interview, unedited interview with a client, and discussion of significant parts of the interview. This last section provides Hays's views of what she is attempting to achieve during the session. The organization of the video is an excellent model for teaching this type of psychotherapy.

Explanation of the Interview

Through questioning by Jon Carlson, Hays provides an overview of her method for helping people develop a healthy exercise plan. Carlson has to work hard to get Hays to explain her views, and they are on the brief side in this section. However, it is apparent from the second and third sections of the videotape that she has much to offer for our understanding of this type of psychotherapy.

Hays briefly explains the benefits of exercise for both mental and physical health. She addresses why people often do not exercise and, on the basis of these issues, how to overcome the barriers to help people exercise. She also discusses maintenance issues and research that supports her point of view. In addition, she points out the importance of gaining medical clearance before prescribing exercise and looking for signs of overuse of exercise. The latter may be an indication of compulsive behavior or addiction. She uses a combination of theoretical orientations in her work, but they appear to be primarily based on the transtheoretical model of change (Prochaska, DiClemente, & Norcross, 1992) and cognitive behavioral techniques, with a hefty dose of empathy throughout. It appears that Hays has a more complete understanding of her views that she keeps "inside her head" but does not completely verbalize in this section. We see them in action in the client interview and discussion of the interview afterward.

Hays's goals for the first session are to conduct a thorough assessment of the client, give the client something that he or she can take to begin the change process, and to help create hope and a sense of feeling better and stronger. Hays's warm and supportive style is a key to achieving these goals.

Furthermore, Hays integrates research on exercise and its benefits to help clients change. These are good examples of an evidence-based approach to treatment. Although she addresses significant problems, she also believes it is important to create hope and be optimistic about positive change.

Client Interview

The client interviewed is a 21-year-old woman who recently moved from California to the Chicago area. She comes to the interview for help to get her exercise program more consistent and secondarily as a way to reduce her weight. She does not appear to have any significant mental health problems or history of such. Thus, the session is focused on the exercise goal.

Hays uses an action-oriented style from the beginning—starting with her initial question, “What would you like us to work on?” She demonstrates the importance of clarifying the client's questions and concerns throughout the interview. She starts by looking at barriers to exercise (common issues include time, motivation, desire to change) and following with an exploration of the client's exercise history, especially when she was more successful. Hays uses these ideas to help the client move into the present. She also explores family and genetic factors that might influence the client's weight and exercise plans. She helps the client realize that some things are biologically programmed, whereas other issues, such as family experiences, are open for change.

Using cognitive behavioral therapy-based methods, the client explores thoughts and feelings that interfere with her exercise goals. However, in an innovative fashion, Hays creates levels of goals for the client to attain. Rather than encouraging just one set of outcomes, she asks the client to create three different levels of goals: Level One: “These would be really great” goals; Level Two: “These would be good enough” goals; and Level Three: “I can live with myself if I do these” goals. She helps the client to develop a very specific exercise plan at each of the three goal levels; she believes that, by having these different gradients of outcomes, the client is more likely to work on the goals and continue

in the future—that is, maintenance is enhanced.

To enhance internal motivation, Hays helps the client develop a list of reasons to exercise. She writes these down on a large piece of paper that she later gives to the client. She also draws on previous interview material to help the client construct the list. From this list she helps the client develop a specific exercise plan. The reasons for exercising are used to help the client develop the plan. Hays inserts important research on exercise, such as the benefits of aerobic exercise on metabolism. Her discussion of this research is a good example of psychoeducation—that is, education not only to inform, but also to help the client change in positive, desired ways.

Hays uses standard cognitive behavioral therapy techniques to list psychological barriers to exercise and how to challenge them with more reasonable and positive views. Those who use this video for teaching specific psychotherapies will need to point out unique terminologies that Hays uses that may not fit with traditional cognitive behavioral therapy views.


Session Review

This section of the video replays selected clips from the client interview and provides a discussion by Hays and Carlson on the thinking and background of what is going on in the interview. This “inner perspective” of the psychologist is a great teaching tool to facilitate learning about the psychologist's approach to psychotherapy. This section is a strength of the video.

The video is part of the Behavioral Health and Health Counseling APA Psychotherapy Video Series. Carlson is the host of the series. The quality of the videotape is excellent, as it was produced in a professional recording studio. The client in the videotape appears to be a

psychologically healthy woman with common issues around exercise. It would be useful to see how this approach works with clients who have concomitant psychological problems such as anxiety and depression. This video would be useful in a variety of psychotherapy and counseling classes to demonstrate psychological interventions for exercise and also as an example of the application of cognitive behavioral therapy to a specific problem area. It is focused on a more introductory level, but there are some good points, such as the levels of goal setting, that may be useful for more seasoned psychologists as well.

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