

# How do we create successful Senior Wellness Programs (SWP)?

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# Overview

- Introduction of SWP
- Common problems among SWP
- A case study of a successful program
- Types of SWP
- Tool Kit for Success!
- Applications
- Question and answers

# What is a Senior Wellness Program (SWP)

Define your program!



# Definition

- SWP programs address the general needs of an elderly person to help the person maintain a high level of independence in a community setting. The focus of the Senior Wellness Program is to monitor and educate seniors on self-management behaviors geared towards good health and wellness.

# What do Seniors see



# What do we want them to see



# Common Issues with SWP's

- Lack of Funding
- Lack of Participation
- Lack of Knowledge
- Personal Chronic Illness
- Varying ability to participate in Physical Activity

# **Case Study of a successful Program: Live Healthy GA**

How did they do it?

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# Population

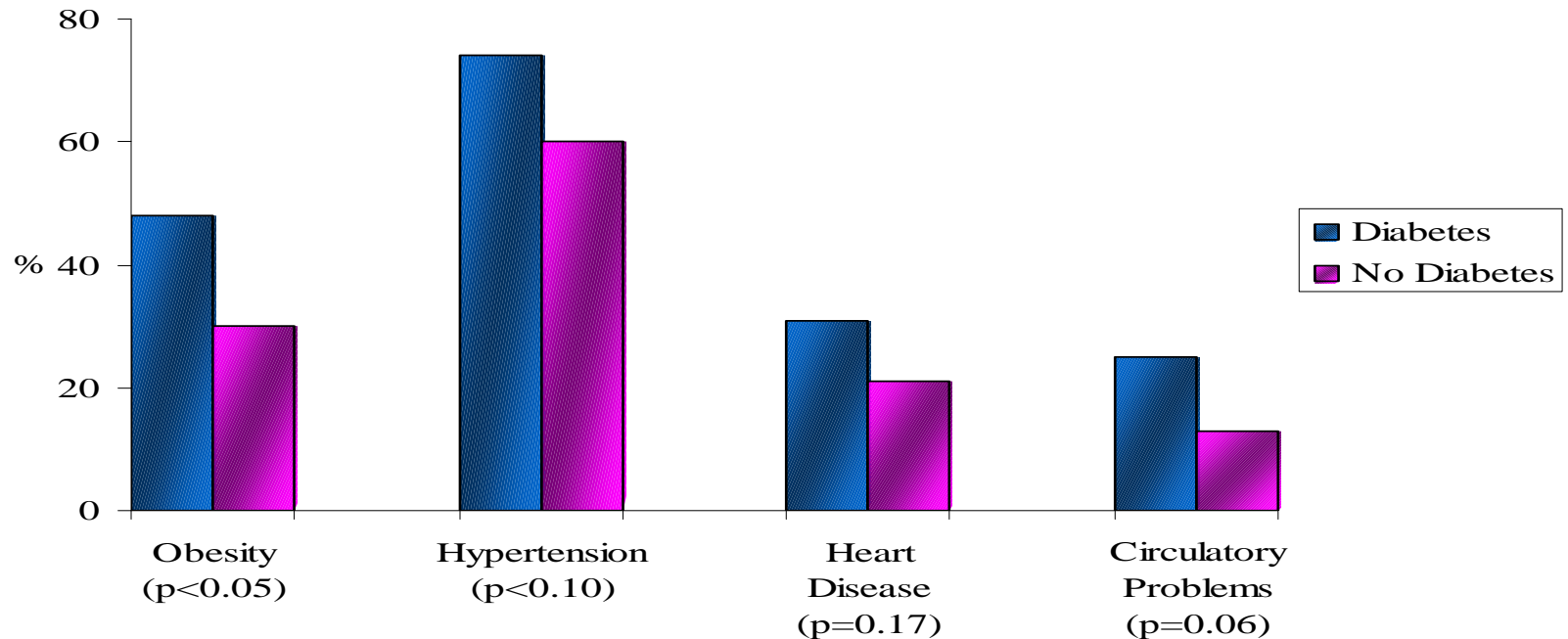
- Number of people in the evaluation 857
- Age (years) 74
- Men 17%
- Women 83%
- White 55%
- African American 44%
- Other 1%

# The problem

- Georgia ranks very low in:
  - Physically unhealthy days (38<sup>th</sup>)
    - Number of days during the previous month when older adults reported their physical health was not good
  - No leisure time physical activity (38<sup>th</sup>)
    - Daily activities including walking, gardening, etc.
  - Older adults who are eating 5 or more fruits and vegetables daily (45<sup>th</sup>)

# Problem Continued

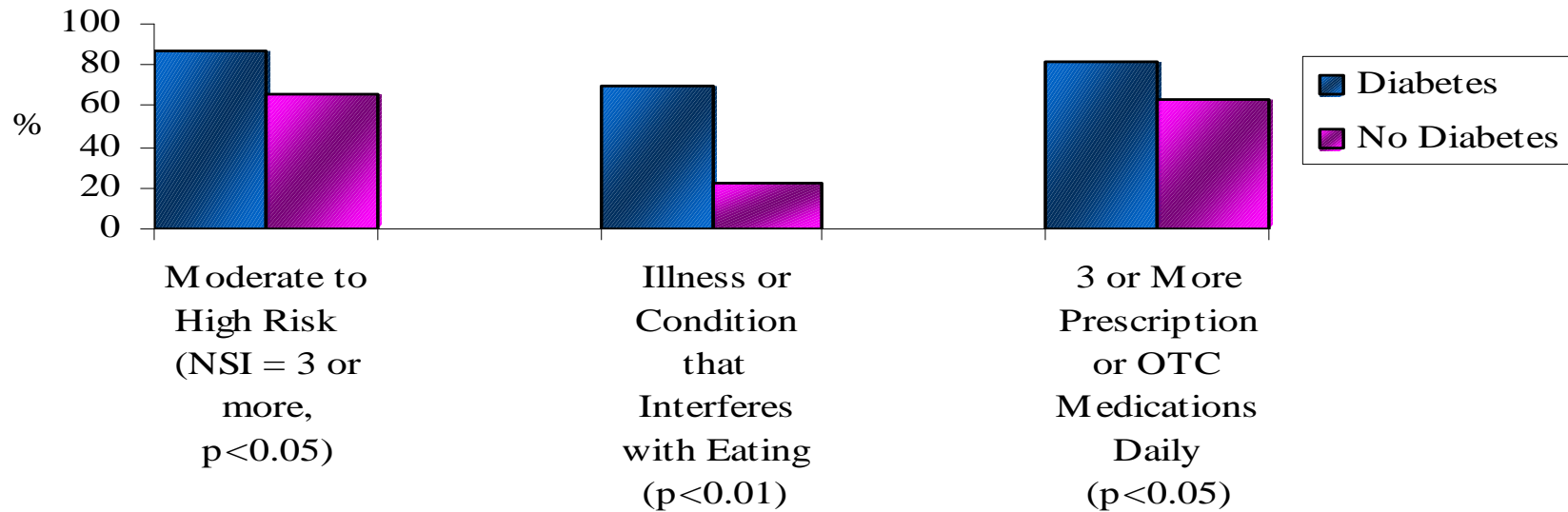
## Cardiovascular Risk Factors



\*[www.livewellagewell.info/study/materials.htm](http://www.livewellagewell.info/study/materials.htm)

# The problem Cont'd

## Nutrition Risk



\*[www.livewellagewell.info/study/materials.htm](http://www.livewellagewell.info/study/materials.htm)

# Method

## Program materials:

- 16 weeks, 1 lesson per week at senior centers
  - 8 lessons **“Serving Up Fruits, Vegetables and Physical Activity Everyday!”**
  - 8 lessons **“Seniors Taking Charge of Diabetes!”**
  - Reviewed by experts
  - Menus, recipes, handouts, games
  - All lessons include physical activity
    - Step counter
    - Walking
    - Chair exercises (NIA)

\*[www.livewellagewell.info/study/materials.htm](http://www.livewellagewell.info/study/materials.htm)

# The results

**Table 3. Quantitative Changes in Diabetes Self-management Behaviors  
(5 or More Days per Week)**

	<b>Before Intervention</b>	<b>After Intervention</b>
<b>Does the participant with diabetes . . .</b>	5 or more days per week	
• Follow a healthful eating plan	61%	79% **
• Follow an eating plan prescribed by health care provider	40%	62% **
• Space carbohydrates evenly	40%	55% **
• Engage in at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity	53%	64% **
• Test blood sugar as recommended	58%	65%
• Check feet	74%	84% **
• Inspect inside of shoes	48%	69% **
• Take diabetes medications as prescribed	92%	91%

\*\* Indicates statistically significant improvement ( $P < 0.05$ ).

[\\*www.livewellagewell.info/study/materials.htm](http://www.livewellagewell.info/study/materials.htm)

# Why did it work

- Community involvement
- Expert Consensus
- Funding
- Use of appropriate metrics
- Enthusiasm

**What can we learn from this?**

Applicable lessons



# Take home lessons

- SWP's can work to facilitate positive health behaviors.
- When given the health Status of our seniors, community partners will come together
- Even with a short term intervention, health status can improve.

# Improvements

- Seniors need to “Buy-in” to a SWP. This was not the case for this study.
- Incentives can work short term, but not long term
- Physical activity participation was low because of the various activity levels of the participants

# Lets Build our Own

How do we get started.



# Step one: Survey

- Found out what your population *needs* and *what they say they need.*
- Find out what types of activities your target population likes and dislikes.
  - Don't be afraid to push their boundaries
- Find the frequency, difficulty, and the time commitment they say is acceptable.

## Step two: Evaluate your resources

- Find out what is available in your community
- Take inventory of resources you already have available
- Examine how much of a time commitment you can make and still have a cohesive Program
- Evaluate the survey and find consensus amongst your target population

## Step 3: Make a plan

- Make a game plan for implementation
- Abide by the wishes of your population
- Incentives work well short term, but not long term
- Cement your time dimensions.

**Please remember...**



**K.I.S.S. K.I.M.**

# K.I.S.S. & K.I.M.

- Keep
- It
- Simple
- Stupid

- Keep
- It
- Measurable

# K.I.S.S.

- Simplicity is the key to success.
- Don't make things so difficult that its hard to manage, duplicate, or evaluate.

# K.I.M.

- If you can't measure your program, it is not a program. It's simply an on going event.
- Don't go through all the trouble of creating a program if you can't properly evaluate what you are doing.
  - You may succeed and not even know it!

# Success

- Depends on you making your program user-friendly and not too competitive
  - Depression is a rampant problem among seniors!
- If you design a program that can be measured and evaluated.
  - No metrics = No SWP

# Types of Senior Wellness Programs

It all depends on  
difficulty level!

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# Type 1: The Simplest

- Simply having someone come in and deliver a 30 minute lecture on a wellness topic
  - How would we measure?
- Field trips to a senior friendly walking track on the monthly/weekly basis
  - How would we measure that?
- Single Metric Evaluation, usually participation

## Type 2: Middle of the road

- Having weekly exercise classes
  - How would we measure?
- Weekly simple health screens
  - Liability?
- Monthly health challenges
  - Potential problems?
- A few metric evaluations

## **Type 3: Full comprehensive program**

- Weekly lessons (Exercise, nutrition, wellness, etc.)
- Multiple weekly health screens
- Contests, Incentives, and other measures to increase participation
- Multiple metric evaluations

# Application

Lets put it to use!



# Scenario 1

- A senior church group has decided to focus on increasing good health habits among seniors in the area. This is a well organized church with good resources. None of the group members has any kind of medical experience.
  - What kind of program should they look to implement?

## Scenario 2

- A senior center director has decided that the center has lost too many members due to chronic illness. The director has decided to implement healthy habits initiative at the senior center.
  - What are the issues that the center director will have to face in implementing a SWP?

## Scenario 3

- A non-profit group has just received a grant for a healthy lifestyle program in their health district. The organization only has 2 full time employees, while the rest are volunteers. The grant does provide for limited resources, but not any additional salaries.
  - What kind of barriers will this organization have to contend with?

# Questions?

What do I need to clear up?



# Sources

- Live Healthy Georgia
- University of Georgia
- Google Images