



Leslie Spencer

Professor
Health & Exercise Science

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Education:

BBA (Computer Information Systems), James Madison University
MS (Health Promotion and Wellness Management), Springfield College
PhD (Health Education), Temple University

Research Expertise:

Wellness Coaching and Behavior Change | Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

My research interests are in two major areas: 1) wellness coaching/motivational interviewing and 2) designing fitness and nutrition programs for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

I began my behavior change research with an extensive review of the Transtheoretical Model (TTM), which culminated in a series of published systematic literature reviews, in which I evaluated the TTM as applied to the following areas: tobacco use, cancer screening behavior, dietary behavior and exercise behavior. More recently, I and my colleagues developed a program for medical residents in which they were trained to use Motivational Interviewing strategies with patients. My next goal is to develop and study a wellness coaching intervention using Motivational Interviewing strategies with special populations.

My research in the area of creating fitness and nutrition programs for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) is ongoing and is unique in that it also involves the caregiver as a recipient of the programs. My colleagues and I have created a model for both fitness programming that is appropriate for people with IDD and a model for family-based nutrition counseling which uses a Motivational Interviewing strategy.

Honors and Awards:

Distinguished Undergraduate Program Award, National Wellness Institute

Member of:

National Wellness Institute (nationalwellness.org)

Recent Academic Projects:

Creation of a Master of Arts in Wellness and Lifestyle Management

Recent Publications:

DiRosa L, Gupta AK, DeBonis S, Spencer L (2017) Effectiveness of a Clinically Oriented Motivational Interviewing Training Program in Increasing Skills & Changing Perceptions. *Osteopathic Family Physician* 9:0-17.

DiRosa L, Pote T, Wilhite B, Spencer L. (2013) Get FIT (Fitness Integration Training): A Program to Reduce Obesity and Metabolic Syndrome in People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and their Caregivers. *J Health Care Poor Underserved*, Fall Issue.