

Helping Workers With Chronic Health Conditions: Results From An ACT Based Telephone Coaching Intervention



Dr. Dayna Lee-Baggley

Dr. Arla Day

Meredith Ivany

Dr. Nicole Vincent

Nova Scotia Health Authority

Saint Mary's University

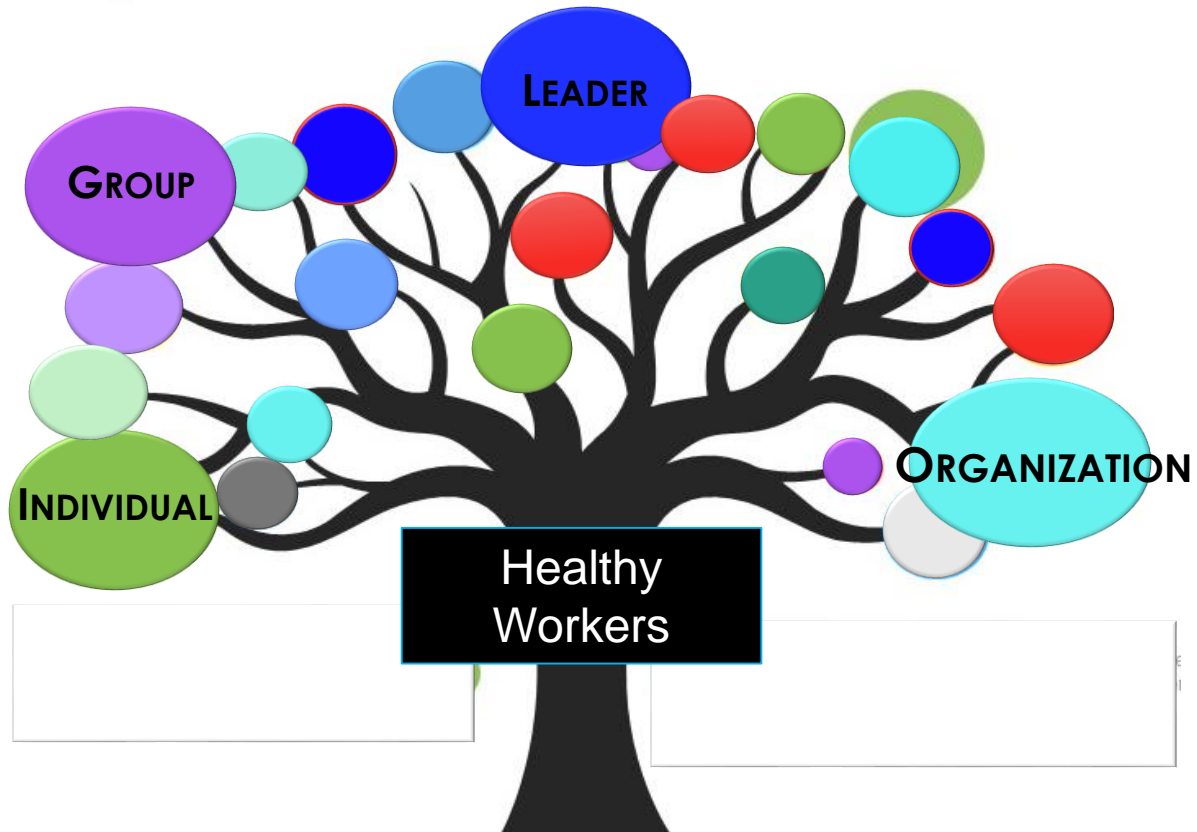
CHRONIC CONDITIONS IN THE WORKPLACE

- **Chronic conditions: diabetes, COPD, obesity, depression, anxiety, chronic pain.**
- **Chronic conditions are linked to increased absences/disability (Pizzi et al., 2005), psychological symptoms (e.g., Velly & Mohit, 2017) and productivity loss (e.g., Gilmour, 2017).**

CHRONIC CONDITIONS IN THE WORKPLACE

- Working has positive effects, including social contact, structure, and meaning (e.g., Saunders & Nedelec, 2014).
- Individuals with chronic conditions are at risk of leaving the workforce.

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ACTION

Awareness and Commitment Training in Organizational Networks

10-week telephone
individual coaching
program

ACT  n

Awareness & Commitment Training in
Organizations & Networks

Participant Manual

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Please contact Dr. Arla Day if you would like more information.
Arla.Day@smu.ca 902-420-5152
www.arladay.ca/EMPOWER/ACTION

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ACTION

- ACT based program to help individuals with chronic conditions **stay engaged in the workforce.**
- **Flexible coaching format** to support participation.
- Program focuses on providing ACT-based tools to deal with “**what gets in the way**” of engaging in self-care and making use of workplace resources (“**how**” rather than “**what**” to do).

PASSENGERS ON THE BUS



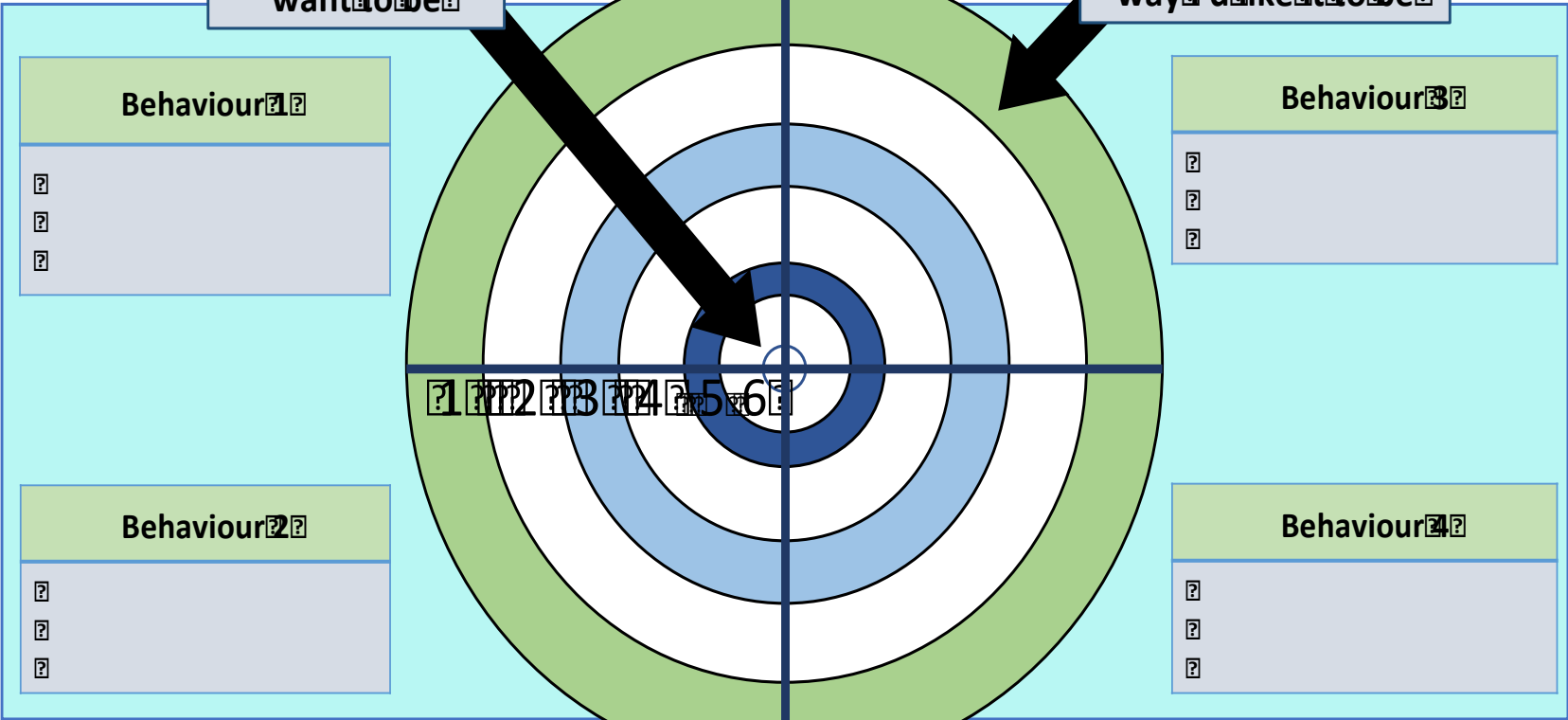
TWO SKILLS:

- **To know where you are going (Route).**
- **Take the bus where you want it to go (Deal with the passengers differently).**

VALUE ?
?

Am I behaving like the person I want to be?

My behaviour is far removed from the way I'd like it to be?



| Your examples | Possible Solutions | What do your passengers say? | What tools can help you? |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Time Conflicts | | | |
| Having to leave work early to get kids to sports. | Asking for help with tasks/kids -carpooling -delegating tasks | | |

'AWAY'
 Moving away from the life you want,
 acting ineffectively, behaving unlike
 the person you want to be

'TOWARDS'
 Moving towards the life outcomes you
 want, acting effectively, behaving like
 the person you want to be

Choice Point

| | |
|-------------------|-----|
| VALUE | ? |
| | ? |
| Behaviours | 1.? |
| | 2.? |
| | 3.? |

What gets in the way?
 Difficult/unhelpful
 thoughts, feelings, &
 sensations

CHALLENGING SITUATION

Tools
 Values, strengths and skills
 that help you to act like the
 person you want to be

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Thoughts: | ? |
| | ? |
| Feelings: | ? |
| | ? |
| Sensations: | ? |
| | ? |

| | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| "Thank the passengers" | Urge Surfing |
| Accept the message | Mindfulness |
| Welcome an old friend | Present Moment Awareness |
| Willingness | Observer Self |
| Acknowledging Pain | Self-compassion |

Adapted from: The Choice Point worksheet, Ciarrochi, Bailey, & Harris, 2013

METHODS

- **10-week phone-based coaching program**
- Participants: Canadian, employed + chronic demand (most healthcare employees)
- Participant manual
- Participants are assigned a coach
- Coaches: professionals working in healthcare, (e.g. social workers, counsellors, and psychologists).
- Weekly phone meetings to review the manual
- **Control wait list design**

PARTICIPANTS

- 63 women, 2 men
- Age: 45.37 (SD = 9.64)
- 82% college/university graduates
- 25% graduate degree recipients
- Work hours: 36.13 (SD = 9.57)
- 77% married
- 69% children

PARTICIPANTS

- Reported chronic demands:
- mental health (43%)
- physical health (58%)
- caregiving demand (48%)

MEASURES

- **Perceived stress.** 7-item stress subscale of the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS; Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995); (e.g., found it difficult to relax)
- **Strain.** 20-item Strain Symptoms Checklist (Bartone et al., 1989) (e.g., aches and pains; feeling down)

MEASURES

- **Emotional Exhaustion.** 3 item subscale from Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI; Maslach et al., 1996); (e.g., felt tired had to face another day)
- **Cynicism.** 3 item subscale from Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI; Maslach et al., 1996); (e.g., felt cynical about whether my work contributes anything)
- **Professional Efficacy.** 3 item subscale from Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI; Maslach et al., 1996); (e.g., accomplished worthwhile things in this job)

RESULTS

| | Challenges | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------|------------|------------|
| | Physical Health | Mental Health | Caregiving | Shift Work |
| Sleep Quality | -.08 | -.23 | -.04 | -.24 |
| Stress | .17 | .24 | .01 | .20 |
| Strain | .19 | .51* | -.07 | .30* |
| Emotional Exhaustion | .06 | .36* | -.08 | .41* |
| Cynicism | .18 | .28* | .00 | .08 |
| Professional Efficacy | -.08 | -.28* | -.24 | .33* |

QUALITATIVE RESULTS

- **100%** of participants rated ACTion as...
 - Practical
 - Relevant
 - Credible
- **94%** rated ACTion as beneficial
- **83%** said they were likely to recommend to colleagues

QUALITATIVE RESULTS

- **Coaching 83%** “very helpful” or higher
- **Weekly practice 72%** “very helpful” or higher

PARTICIPANT REACTIONS

- **100%** reported 'moderate' to 'excellent' progress
- **89%** reported met their program goals
- **83%** reported made positive changes at work

PARTICIPANT REACTIONS

“This program empowered me to move forward with my vision for my life and helped identify my blockers and strategies to manage them. We could all benefit from such a program. Enjoyed the visuals and videos, especially the coaching.”

PARTICIPANT REACTIONS

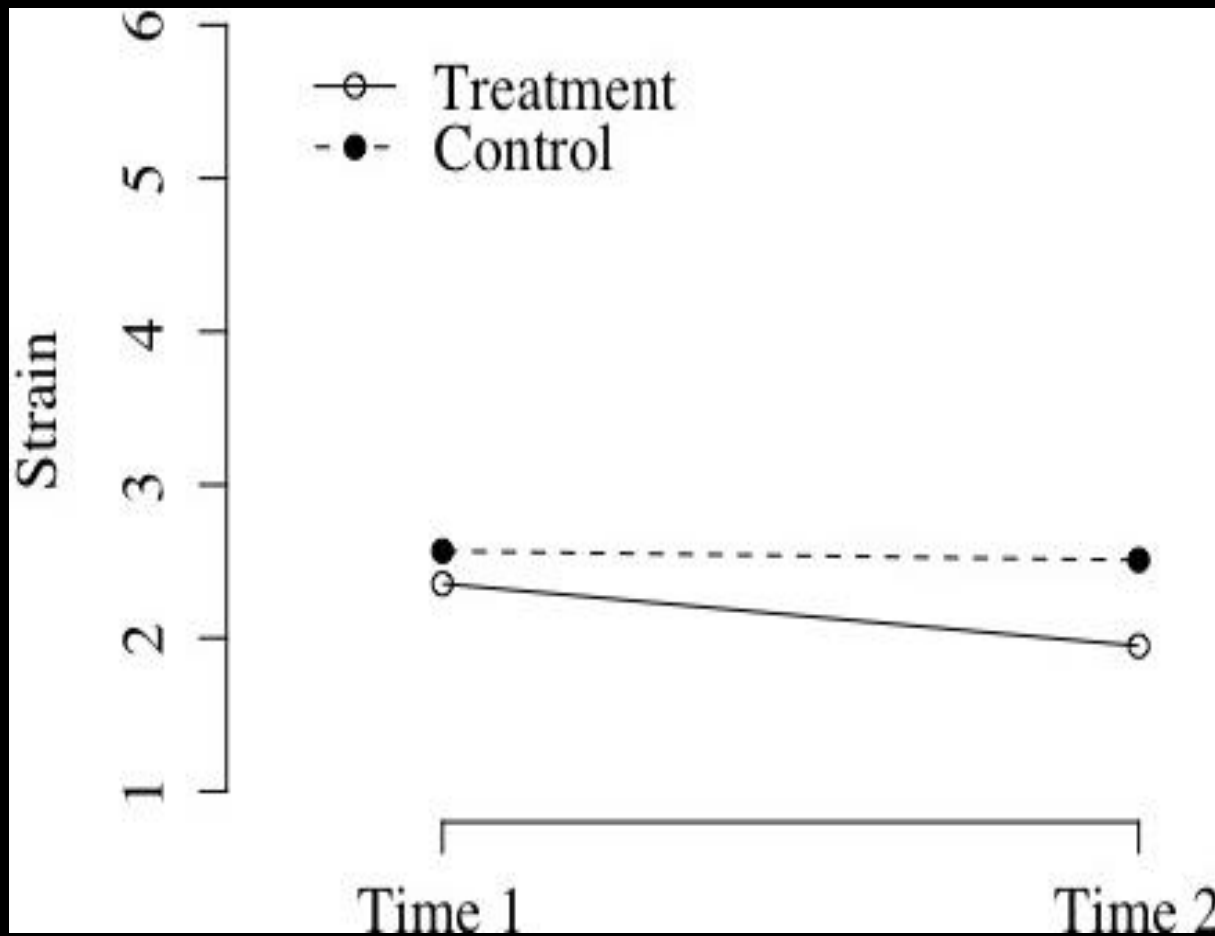
It was hard to fit it into my busy schedule, but I was always glad I did. It forced me to look at my values and habits in a methodical, practical way with clear well-thought out steps and tools to help me change behaviours that were holding me back. I felt heard and respected in my journey.

QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

Group by Time interactions at Post

| Outcome | Statistics | Significance |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| Stress | $F(1,49) = 0.74, p = .39$ | NS |
| Strain | $F(1,49) = 5.56, p = .02$ | $p < .05$ |
| Emotional Exhaustion | $F(1,49) = 1.06, p = .31$ | NS |
| Cynicism | $F(1,49) = 0.35, p = .56$ | NS |
| Professional Efficacy | $F(1,49) = 0.93, p = .34$ | NS |

QUANTITATIVE RESULTS



CONCLUSION

- Participants responded very **positively** about the ACTion program and indicated that they would **recommend it to others**.
- Participants reported they found the **coaching very helpful** and that it contributed to their success by helping them clarify material and remain accountable.

CONCLUSION

- In terms of **behaviour change**, all participants felt that they **made progress** throughout the program, and most reported meeting their behaviourally based program goals.

CONCLUSION

- At post only **strain** showed a group by time interaction in improvements.
- Other ACT studies suggest differences may emerge at **longer follow-up intervals** (e.g., J Gifford et al., 2011; Järvelä-Reijonen et al., 2018) .



Dr. Dayna Lee-Baggley
drleebaggley@gmail.com
drleebaggley.com



Behaviour Change Institute