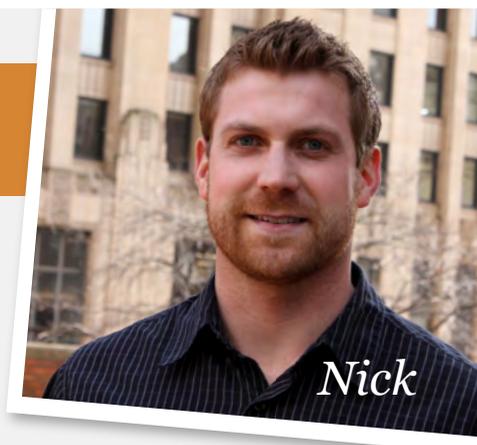


Making the Call

TLC QUARTERLY
NEWSLETTER
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Meet Your Coach

“The nice thing about this program is we’re really giving them the tools to help themselves,” says TLC Coach Nick.



Growing up in a military family, Nick was there when his dad returned from war. “My dad is in the Marine Corps,” says Nick, who was born in Florida and moved around the country as his dad was stationed in different locations. “I experienced my dad going to war, and I’ve talked with him about the mentality ... that soldier mentality.”

Nick is a coach with the Telephone Lifestyle Coaching (TLC) program. The program was launched in late 2011 by the Veterans Administration National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (NCP) to help Veterans with quitting tobacco, weight loss and four other targeted behavior change goals.

As a TLC coach, Nick works with Veterans through regular phone calls to help identify and make positive healthy life changes. It’s not always an instant change, but Nick said the successes often come. One Veteran’s success came after several calls. “We kept working on every call, trying to figure out what was motivating him to quit tobacco,” Nick said. “One day, three months into the program, he just said he was quit. Even though the conversations were difficult, it seems like he was acclimating himself to the idea. It was just on him to follow through. He kept taking the calls, so that shows he was committed.”

TLC was launched in November 2011 with VISN 4 being the first to send consult referrals for Veterans. Since that time VISNs 8, 15, 16 and 21 have all sent referrals and have Veterans taking advantage of TLC. The two-year pilot program has a goal of serving 4,500 Veterans per year by providing phone-based coaching in the six areas of behavior change – weight loss, nutrition, stress, physical activity, quitting tobacco and alcohol reduction.

“We’re trying to get them back to being independent with these goals,” Nick said.

“I work with one gentleman who was on oxygen 24 hours a day. He was in a scooter. He’s made his 10% weight loss goal. He’s lost 20-something pounds, and now he’s walking. He’s actually doing regular physical activity. **He feels so much better. It’s just so rewarding.”**

- Coach Marlie

“What they appreciate is we take them **step-by-step, baby step, at their pace,**” Jane said about participants in TLC. “We’re meeting them where they’re at and taking them along at the pace they prefer.”

- Coach Jane

Coaches Corner

Tough, But Worth It:

Veteran Ronald Parker Teams with TLC Health Coach to Lose Weight and Get Healthier



After struggling with his weight for a long time, Veteran Ronald Parker says that he found the motivation to change when he looked at himself one day and had a big realization. "I knew that I looked ridiculous," he says. "I realized that if I didn't do something, the excess weight would just stay there." And so would his constant pain, which Ronald hoped might improve with weight loss and lifestyle changes.

Coached

In December 2011, Ronald began the Telephone Lifestyle Coaching (TLC) Program after receiving information from his primary care provider at the Philadelphia (PA) VAMC. Almost immediately, he began to see the benefits that a health coach could offer. "I found everything that TLC offered to be valuable and helpful," he says. "But I think that a big reason why it works is the coaching. You need something to motivate you, but you can't do it without the full program to coach you along." And knowing that "somebody does care and is trying to help" is what has helped him start changing his life for the better.

Never Say Never

Partnered with his personal TLC coach for 4 months, Ronald has made much progress in a relatively short time and only nine coaching calls. Completing the program has helped him lose about 40 pounds and successfully create a number of new health habits. "I'm on a regular basis with my veggies and fruit now," Ronald explains, "and I've started eating the foods that I should—foods that are going to help me." Because he writes down what he eats and checks his diet when he runs into challenges, he says that he now rarely makes a poor food choice. "I used to think that I could never change things, never lose weight, and never enjoy healthy food. But my mom always said 'never say never,' and I've really taken her advice to heart."

Ron also never used to exercise, but now he's doing a lot more walking. "Before the program, I could only stand for 3 to 4 minutes," he reports. "Now I can walk for 10 to 15 minutes... that's a huge improvement!" Because of these healthy changes, Ronald is happier now, too. "I feel a lot better—I have fewer 'bad days'

Happier

Because of these healthy changes, Ronald is happier now, too. "I feel a lot better—I have fewer 'bad days'

and less pain than before!" And he says that his physician is also excited. According to him, she was always encouraging, but seemed disappointed sometimes because she thought he might never make the changes that she was talking about. "Now she's smiling though," Ronald reports, "and she seems happier now that she sees me making real progress."

Mindfulness

He says that when he made up his mind to lose weight, he was able to make the important behavioral changes that benefited him most. "You can have all the programs you want, but you still need to do the work," Ronald emphasizes. "I decided to make these changes for me, to satisfy myself, and that was really important."

He also believes that a large part of his success comes from just being mindful. "You have to know your goals and what it takes to lose weight," he says, "because you aren't always going to have a program to guide you." So Ronald stays focused on what he's doing—and what he needs to do—and always keeps "moderation" in mind.

Definitely Better

Ronald definitely recommends TLC to other Veterans because he thinks that the "fun and educational" program can benefit those who are ready to positively change their lives. He believes that "TLC's coaches can help just about anyone who's ready to lose weight and get healthier." And he has some words of wisdom for Veterans who "want to stop looking bad and feel better."

"It's going to be tough—and there will be pain before the results—but it'll be worth it. Like everything, there's hard work involved. And you need to make big changes," Ronald explains. "Determination and motivation are the keys, but so are the program and your coach—the work is going to be on you, but you need something and someone to help, too. I kept with TLC, and with the help of my health coach, was able to make changes for the better. You can, too!"

TLC Healthy Living Goal: Be Physically Active



Veterans in the TLC program may choose a goal of increasing their physical activity. Topics discussed may include:

What are the benefits of being physically active? Physical activity does more than improve your appearance; it helps you to manage your weight; it improves memory and thinking, and may even improve your moods and sleep. Regular physical activity also can improve pain management and lowers the risk of many diseases like diabetes and cancer.

How much physical activity do I need? You can increase your overall activity with some simple lifestyle choices. For example, make a habit of taking the stairs instead of the elevator or of parking at the far end of the lot instead of a closer spot.

Aim for at least 2 ½ hours each week of moderate-intensity physical activity. If physical activity is moderate, you can still talk, but you can't sing. Include physical activity in any combination that fits your schedule. Every 10 minute session counts toward your weekly total of 2 ½ hours.

What kinds of physical activities are helpful? You are more likely to improve your fitness when physical activity becomes a regular part of your life. Choose activities that you enjoy. In addition to moderate-intensity aerobic activity, you should also include strengthening at least twice a week. Stretching should also be done any time you are physically active and can help improve circulation, range of motion in your joints, and relieve stress.

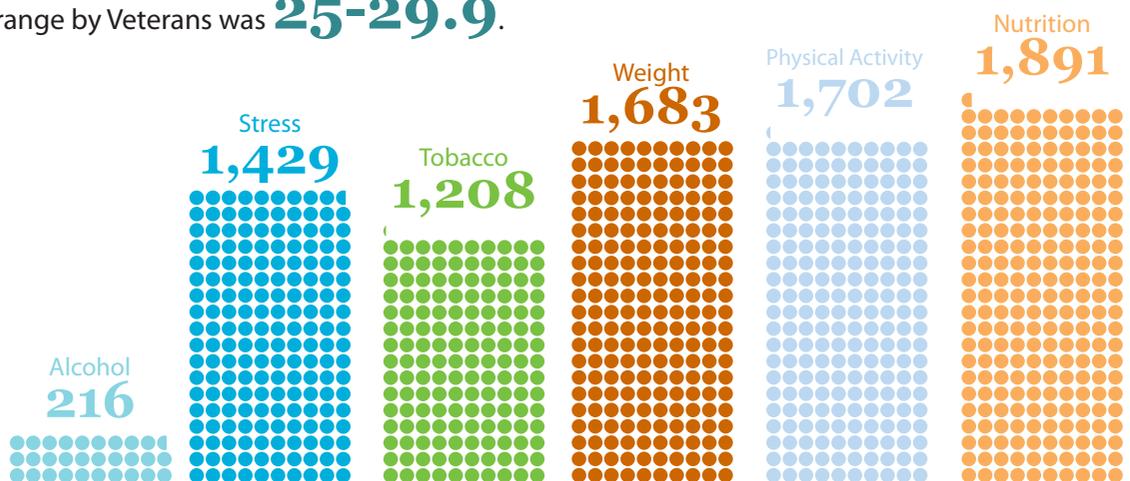
For more information about the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, please click [here](#).

You can be active in many ways without spending any money. Click [here](#) for some ideas to get you moving for free.

TLC By the Numbers

To date, TLC has had **10,810** contacts with Veterans. The program has received **4,147** consults and **2,422** Veterans have enrolled in the program. **321** Veterans declined the program. **1,404** were unable to be reached and **92** were ineligible. Most cited BMI range by Veterans was **25-29.9**.

Those enrolled in the program have set **8,129** goals thus far and are broken down in the numbers to the right:



● = 8 Veterans

