



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

ACTIVATE YOUR HEART

Program Implementation Guide

A community health
collaboration with



Dignity Health.
Northridge Hospital
Medical Center

Funded by

AstraZeneca HealthCare Foundation

*Connections for
Cardiovascular HealthSM*

Program Implementation ✓List

- ☐ Create a collaborative by identifying community partners to (see page 9):
 - ☐ Teach the EmPOWERED to Serve curriculum
 - ☐ Conduct a cooking demo
 - ☐ Lead a grocery store tour
 - ☐ Collect biometric data
 - ☐ Evaluate and report on biometric data
- ☐ Identify YMCA team member(s) to lead **ACTIVATE YOUR HEART** group fitness classes (see page 10)
- ☐ Make other staff assignments and conduct **ACTIVATE YOUR HEART** staff training (see page 10)
- ☐ Add session detail to Course Plan (see page 10)
- ☐ Book facility (classroom, group fitness space, area for child care, kitchen if available and as necessary) (see page 10)
- ☐ Add session detail to Course Plan (see page 10)
- ☐ Recruit participants (see page 12)
- ☐ Celebrate your successes (see page 13)
- ☐ Budget for **ACTIVATE YOUR HEART** (see page 14 - 15)



The goal of community-based health education programs is to prevent disease, improve health, and enhance quality of life.

ACTIVATE YOUR HEART is a community-based program aimed at reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease and increasing well-being through multi-faceted education by a collaborative of experts.

WHY FOCUS ON CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE?

According to the American Heart Association's *2017 Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics Update*¹, cardiovascular disease accounts for more than 800,000 – or 1 in every 3 – deaths in the United States each year, and remains the number one cause of death in the US. Why?

- > Tobacco use – although declining – is still widespread.
- > Roughly 1/3 of US adults do not engage in leisure time physical activity.
- > In general, the American diet does not score high as an “ideal healthy diet”. Excess sodium consumption is still a concern.
- > Obesity continues to increase.
- > Roughly one in three American adults have high cholesterol, and one third have high blood pressure.
- > Adults diagnosed with diabetes continue to increase in number and percent of the population.

Implementing the **ACTIVATE YOUR HEART** program can help improve the heart health of members of your community and work to meet the American Heart Association's goal of reducing deaths from heart disease and stroke by 20% by 2020.

¹https://healthmetrics.heart.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Heart-Disease-and-Stroke-Statistics-2017-ucm_491265.pdf

ACTIVATE YOUR HEART

WHY A MULTI-FACETED EDUCATION FORMAT?

The format of **ACTIVATE YOUR HEART** is designed to include a variety of related disciplines. This multi-faceted approach speaks to a variety of learning

styles for greater impact across your audience and reinforces important points for better retention and application.

WHY TEACH USING A COLLABORATIVE OF EXPERTS?

The benefits of a collaborative approach to health promotion includes:

- > Synergy of the collaborative partners;
- > Shared resources including mobilizing individual expertise for the benefit of the whole; and
- > Avoiding duplication of efforts in a time of scarce resources and high need.

ACTIVATE YOUR HEART includes three components:

- > A curriculum and hands-on activities
- > Group fitness classes
- > Biometric screening and nutrition and cardiovascular health knowledge assessments

The curriculum is based on resources provided for the *EmPOWERED to Serve* program created by the American Heart Association (www.empoweredtoserve.org). These lectures are complemented by handouts that reflect the materials discussed.

Hands-on activities that supplement the **ACTIVATE YOUR HEART** curriculum are two cooking demonstrations and a grocery store tour. The cooking demos may require you to have a food handler permit or other certification; check your state and local laws.

LESSON LEARNED

If you don't have access to a kitchen, a cooking demo can be as simple as blending a smoothie or assembling a salad. An oven or stove is not necessary.

LESSON LEARNED

Provide yourself ample time to identify a local market for a grocery store tour. Also, they may require you provide a proof of liability insurance which can add to this timeline.

The grocery store tour is – you guessed it – a trip to the local market, but with the intention of demonstrating and learning how to choose affordable foods that support a healthy diet. Writing a script for the tour is helpful to effectively dovetail the tour with the curriculum and assure that you do not miss any highlights.

Group fitness classes are incorporated into **ACTIVATE YOUR HEART** to reinforce the importance of physical activity for heart health.

Weekly **ACTIVATE YOUR HEART** meetings are scheduled for two hours – one hour of instruction and activities, and one hour of exercise.

Collecting biometric data and administering questionnaires that measure nutrition and cardiovascular health knowledge, before and after the course, allow participants to chart their progress, and provides you a way to gauge how well your program is meeting its goals to educate and improve health.

LESSON LEARNED

Assure your fitness instructor is properly certified, and that they modify activities to meet the capabilities of the participants.

Program History

ACTIVATE YOUR HEART was developed by the Mid Valley Family YMCA and the Dignity Health - Northridge Hospital Foundation, Center for Healthier Communities through generous funding by the AstraZeneca Healthcare Foundation's *Connections for Cardiovascular HealthSM* program.

Since originally conceived as an 8-week, 1.5 hours per week program, **ACTIVATE YOUR HEART** has evolved into a 10-week, 2 hours per week program. The additional 2 weeks are comprised of a session in the beginning and one at the end of the course to better focus on introducing and summarizing the course, and collecting pre- and post- biometrics. The additional ½ hour for each session provides for an entire hour of exercise.

In 2016 and 2017 – the first 2 years of this program – the Mid Valley Family YMCA conducted 19 sessions with a total of nearly 800 tracked participants; and we witnessed substantial increases in knowledge of healthy nutrition and cardiovascular

disease, complemented by decreases in blood pressure, body mass index, cholesterol and glucose — metrics that speak to the risks of cardiovascular disease.

Many of our participants — like Nina, featured in the following Participant Spotlight — say **ACTIVATE YOUR HEART** is life-changing because it gave them the information and tools they needed to develop healthy habits.

ACTIVATE YOUR HEART continues to be a vital resource for our community to improve cardiovascular health through prevention education and take-home tools to implement behaviors that improve health outcomes.

ACTIVATE YOUR HEART
Participant Spotlight

Nina is no stranger to the YMCA. Decades ago, she took her then 3-year old daughter for swimming lessons at a YMCA in Seattle, Washington. So it is no surprise that when Nina was recently looking for a place to swim to rehabilitate her surgically repaired knee, her daughter suggested the East Valley Family YMCA. It was there that she enrolled, and Nina will not hesitate to tell you: "ACTIVATE YOUR HEART changed my life!" She now sees the world through a different lens and prioritizes her health over her job. Nina dependably utilizes the fitness resources of the East Valley Family YMCA, and consistently applies the nutritional and behavioral lessons she learned in the ACTIVATE YOUR HEALTH classroom.



LESSON LEARNED

Invest in high-grade equipment to measure blood pressure and weight to assure measurements are consistently accurate, and the equipment has a long useful life.

Creating a Collaborative of Experts

The success of **ACTIVATE YOUR HEART** hinges on identifying partners with expertise and a shared vision, and then organizing and coordinating them to effectively deliver all three program elements.

In general, consider relevant organizations or individuals that you have successfully collaborated with, or are known to someone that you already work with. Otherwise, find someone in your local area that is providing the type of service you are trying to recruit for. Networking in your community is one effective way to learn of such prospects. Make sure you get references before you formalize the collaboration agreement if the candidate is previously unknown.

FINDING A PARTNER TO TEACH THE CURRICULUM AND FACILITATE HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES

A good candidate to deliver the *EmPOWERED to Serve* curriculum is a credentialed Health Educator, Promotora, or Community Health Worker — one that knows the community well. The time commitment for the Educator is 1 hour per week, plus class preparation time that will vary. (You should allocate 3 hours per week in your budget.) This partner may also be able to conduct the cooking demonstration and/or lead the grocery store tour. Alternatively, you may be able to recruit within your YMCA for someone to conduct the hands-on activities. If not, don't overlook students from your local colleges or specialty schools — such as culinary schools — or other skilled volunteers that are looking for experience or desire to give back to their community.

FINDING A PARTNER TO COLLECT BIOMETRIC DATA

Biometric data are useful for participants to track their progress and for you to gauge the effectiveness of your program. In the Mid Valley Family YMCA's **ACTIVATE YOUR HEART** course, we measure blood pressure, weight and height (from which we compute BMI), blood glucose levels and cholesterol levels in the first and final weeks of each course. Blood pressure, weight, and height can be measured by any team member. You will need to partner with an outside agency to collect glucose and cholesterol measurements because of the expertise and special equipment required. Contact your local community hospital, community health clinic, a pharmacy, or a local nursing school to provide this service. You may also identify a timely health fair in your area that conducts such screenings. If you are conducting the course for a community clinic's patients, the clinic may also provide you a participant's relevant data direct from their electronic health record.

FINDING AN EVALUATOR

To assess the success of your **ACTIVATE YOUR HEART** program, it is prudent to use an outside evaluator to analyze the data you collect, if your program is funded by a third party and they require periodic reporting with statistics. Consultants for such service are readily available, but don't overlook your local college or university and their interns to potentially minimize this expense.

Assembling Your ACTIVATE YOUR HEART Team

While your collaborative partners are being identified and qualified, appoint members of your staff to be part of the **ACTIVATE YOUR HEART** Team. You will need a designated **ACTIVATE YOUR HEART** Program Coordinator, and a Session Coordinator for each course. In addition to a Group Exercise Instructor to lead the fitness component (and you should designate 2 so you have a back-up or in the event you have a large class), you will need a Healthy Lifestyle Counselor for each course to build the relationship between the participant and the YMCA, and act as a long-term support after the course ends. If you choose to offer child care, you will also need Child Activity Center staff; two experienced, certified caretakers are recommended.

The Program Coordinator's responsibilities include leading the collaborative; overseeing participant recruitment efforts and evaluation; and preparing and submitting any necessary reports. If you decide to hold the course outside of the YMCA walls, the Program Coordinator should also direct the site selection. Important things to consider in selecting a site include:

- > Does the site have sufficient and adequate space to conduct education and fitness, and provide a segregated space to provide child care to participants if necessary?
- > Is the site equipped to accept the community at large as well as its own constituents?
- > Does the site carry satisfactory liability insurance to cover all collaborative partners?

- > Does the site have resources to help you recruit participants?

These considerations largely speak to the economies of scale in providing this type of program off-site. For the **ACTIVATE YOUR HEART** courses conducted by the Mid Valley Family YMCA, 60-80 enrollees per course – given a 3-year track record of roughly 50% attrition – is considered an optimal number to cost-effectively deliver the program and successfully manage participants.

The Program Coordinator also oversees the Session Coordinator. The Session Coordinator is responsible to assure all collaborative partners are effectively working to consistently deliver a high impact **ACTIVATE YOUR HEART** program. As such, they are also responsible for staff training and any necessary collaborative partner orientation or training.

In addition, the Session Coordinator is responsible to book space – such as a classroom, fitness space, area for child care, and a kitchen – in your YMCA or in the off-site facility the course is being held. He or she will also prepare the Course Plan. The Course Plan is a calendar that details all activities to be conducted on a given day, and records specifics for room set-up; materials and supplies required; and delegated partner responsibilities.



LESSON LEARNED

For after-school sessions, there was a lower attrition of enrollees when no-cost child care was offered. However, having child care in the same room you use for instruction can cause a distraction for participants, so book a separate space if you can.

Participant Recruitment and Retention

“Offer the **ACTIVATE YOUR HEART** program, and participants will flock to sign up and stay all 10 weeks” are not words to live by. With so many activities competing for limited time, recruiting is an important part of the success of the **ACTIVATE YOUR HEART** program.

The keys to recruitment and retention are comprehensive outreach and participation incentives. The staples of a good outreach program are flyers customized by site and the demographics of the audience. Places to distribute flyers outside the YMCA walls include schools, community park and recreation centers, libraries, medical and dental offices, table-based community events, and even the community board of your local Starbucks®. Flyers can also be emailed, posted on a partner website, and/or fashioned into an online announcement or invitation. Consider setting up an “**ACTIVATE YOUR HEART** Info Table” at your local school to promote your program and distribute information about cardiovascular health; or have them post your

LESSON LEARNED

An **ACTIVATE YOUR HEART** Info Table at your local school is most effective at dismissal because families are less hurried than at morning drop off.

program information on their website and social media.

Participation incentives are critical to spur enrollment and fuel retention. How rich your incentives are being largely contingent on your budget, but also look to your partners for giveaways they may have to market their agencies – for example, branded water bottles or recyclable bags. Also consider a raffle for more expensive incentives, like a blood pressure gauge or a vegetable spiralizer.

A great incentive for those that complete the program is a free, 3-month trial membership to your YMCA. This reward allows participants to further practice their newly learned healthy habits, and some will convert to a paying membership after the trial is exhausted.

LESSON LEARNED

Water bottles are a great giveaway because they reinforce the **ACTIVATE YOUR HEART** program’s focus on hydration and avoidance of sugar-filled drinks for cardiovascular health.

Celebrate Your Successes

It is important to celebrate your **ACTIVATE YOUR HEART** program's successes. Consider providing graduates a "Certificate of Completion". This Certificate can also be used as a proof of completion for activating the trial YMCA membership if you are offering that incentive. You can also schedule a pot luck of healthy foods to celebrate during the last session, or a biannual BBQ for all **ACTIVATE YOUR HEART** alumni.

Celebrating your successes should also include disseminating your outcomes and the importance of cardiovascular health to a broader audience. Share **ACTIVATE YOUR HEART** participant success stories and lessons you learn on social media; in your monthly member and donor newsletters; and with local media outlets for publication.



Budgeting for ACTIVATE YOUR HEART

The Mid Valley Family YMCA conducted 19 courses of **ACTIVATE YOUR HEART** between 2016 and 2017. This experience provides for a realistic, test-driven budget to deliver this program.

Your budget will require line items for the Health Educator (or equivalent); Group Exercise Instructor; Child Activity Center staff, if you offer child care; and an outside Evaluator (if required). You will also need to budget for clinical screenings for blood glucose and cholesterol level testing — the largest single line item — if that is part of your program. Program supplies you will need to purchase include: food

demonstration supplies; incentives and other prizes; and equipment to support the program (like blood pressure gauges and light exercise equipment if the program is offered off-site). If you plan to offer YMCA Membership Scholarships as an incentive for program completion, you will also need to account for this expense. Promotional materials to support your recruitment efforts can also add up. At the Mid Valley Family YMCA, they distribute 2,000–3,000 flyers for each course, complemented by a few posters and banners. Estimated costs for these items are:

ESTIMATED COST PER 10-WEEK COURSE*

Health Educator	\$600–\$750 (\$20–\$25 per hour X 3 hours per week X 10 weeks)
Group Exercise Instructor	\$500–\$600 (\$25–\$30 per hour X 2 hours per week X 10 weeks)
Child Activity Center Staff	\$450–\$600 (\$15–\$20 per hour X 3 hours per week X 10 weeks)
Outside Evaluator	\$250–\$300 (cost varies by scope of work)
Clinical Screening	\$1,200–\$1,600
Food Demonstration Supplies	\$100
Incentives and Prizes	\$400
YMCA Membership Scholarships	\$30–\$45 X 3 months X number of ACTIVATE YOUR HEART graduates
Promotional Materials	\$400
ESTIMATED TOTAL COST PER SESSION	\$3,900 – \$4,750

*Estimated personnel costs include payroll taxes and benefits, and costs may vary geographically.

ACTIVATE YOUR HEART

To get the most complete cost picture for your ACTIVATE YOUR HEART program, you should also allocate salaries for the portion of time spent on the program by the persons that fill the Program Coordinator, Session Coordinator and Healthy Lifestyles Counselor roles.

Finding enough resources to cover the budget for this mission-centric program can be challenging. Grant funding is one strategy. The Mid Valley Family YMCA received generous support from the AstraZeneca Healthcare Foundation's *Connections for Cardiovascular HealthSM* grant program. Other fundraising strategies include:

- > Adding **ACTIVATE YOUR HEART** as another critical "Case for Support" in your Annual Support Campaign;
- > Organizing a special event – like a walk/run or Zumba®thon – and including a Meet and Greet with program graduates;
- > Including an opportunity to sponsor an **ACTIVATE YOUR HEART** participant as a live auction item at an existing fundraising event (with a program alumnus sharing their story before the auction commences); and
- > Partnering with a local agency to be included in any cardiovascular health grants they are awarded.

You may also consider abbreviating the program to reduce the budget required and make **ACTIVATE YOUR HEART** a more sustainable part of your organization. For example:

- > Use past participants as volunteer program ambassadors to help with collecting data and improving retention by enhancing the participants' relationship with the YMCA;
- > Deliver the *EmPOWERED to Serve* curriculum in the context of an already existing group exercise class at your YMCA;
- > Do not collect biometrics that are associated with clinical expenses (blood glucose and cholesterol measures) or engage an organization that is willing to subsidize or donate these services; and/or
- > Target local businesses, organizations, and public entities to donate incentive giveaways and prizes for program participants.

ACTIVATE YOUR HEART supports the YMCA's mission to strengthen communities through personal and social change. It is a compelling example of how community-based collaboratives can improve health outcomes – one heart at a time.

ACTIVATE YOUR HEART



AstraZeneca HealthCare Foundation
Connections for Cardiovascular HealthSM

The AstraZeneca HealthCare Foundation is a tax-exempt entity organized under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The Foundation is not part of the commercial entity, AstraZeneca Pharmaceuticals. *Connections for Cardiovascular HealthSM* program data are self-reported to the Foundation and its evaluation partner. The AstraZeneca HealthCare Foundation and its evaluation partner make no claim as to the accuracy of the data nor can they verify the individual outcome data from which aggregate conclusions are drawn. Grammar, style, form, and function are solely the responsibility of the presenting organization.

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