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Motivate your clients to make healthy lifestyle changes

Professional counseling techniques to help people determine their readiness to make behavioral changes and stay on track will be explored during the Sarasota County Wellness Coalition's next seminar, "Motivational Interviewing: Key Techniques and Strategies." The free seminar will take place from 8-9 a.m. Friday, March 26, at the Laurel/Nokomis School Cafetorium, 1900 E. Laurel Road, Nokomis. The speakers include psychologists and authors Dr. Chris Cortman and Dr. Harold Shinintzky. Cortman has been a licensed psychologist for 24 years in Venice and Sarasota.

According to empirical research conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, health and wellbeing is largely determined by the lifestyle choices people make every day. For many, the decisions about what to eat, drink and ingest are automatic. This presents special challenges for health professionals – physicians, counselors, dietitians, nurses and others – who advise clients and patients about methods to reduce stress, lose weight, quit smoking, and make other changes conducive to good health. Topics in the seminar include the clinical benefits of motivational interviewing, stages of change, motivational interviewing techniques and clinical strategies to increase compliance.

The Sarasota County Wellness Coalition works through partnerships to create a healthier community. The coalition sponsors free and low-cost education sessions on a range of obesity prevention topics. Member organizations of the coalition include the Sarasota County Health Department, Sarasota County Parks and Recreation, Sarasota County Extension Family Nutrition Program, Venice Regional Medical Center, Sarasota County Schools, Gulfcoast South Area Health Education Center, and South County Family YMCA.

The Gulfcoast South Area Health Education Center has applied for continuing education credits for licensed nurses and mental health professionals who attend the seminar. They also have applied for credits for registered dietitians and dietetic technicians through the Commission of Dietetic Registration.

For more information or to register for the seminar, contact Lucie Gurley at 941-361-6602 or via e-mail at lgurley@halth.usf.edu. Visit The Sarasota County Wellness Coalition's Web site at www.sarasotawellness.org.