

BeFit for a Better Tomorrow

BeFit started in the Fall of 2011 as an answer to the age old question; How do we continue living a healthful life with good physical and mental health? The vision for the group was simple: A comprehensive program that would consist of exercise activities, nutrition classes and health education that would be bolstered by peer support-a whole-person program for adults with developmental disabilities. We focus on three key elements, exercise, food/nutrition and health education.

The exercise portion places emphasis on cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength, flexibility and gaining *or* retaining range of motion. Activities include going to the YMCA, talking with personal trainers and learning how to safely utilize equipment at the gym such as cardiovascular machines (treadmill, stair climber, elliptical), weights (free weights, a targeted machine, or calisthenics) and also how to monitor personal health when using the track or when playing a group sport (like appropriate hydration, heart rate and stretching).

The nutritional component of this class consists of learning about healthy eating, purchasing and food preparation. We begin by looking at our personal relationship with food, examining our eating routines and gaining knowledge about reading food labels and how they then translate to the governments “My Plate” initiative.

In the health education section of BeFit, we encourage the group to look at their attitudes towards health, safety and personal awareness. BeFit engages professionals to work with the group, such as the local police and fire department, representatives from Sexual Assault Support Services of Midcoast Maine, a

nutritionist and a local minor league basketball player.

Participants of Exercise and health curriculums have demonstrated:

- Increase in lean body mass
- Increased healthy food choices
- Greater Life Satisfaction
- Increased self awareness
- Increased confidence of their ability to exercise and move more safely
- Increased muscle strength, endurance, cardiovascular fitness and general health knowledge

In the past year, BeFit participants have enjoyed many physical activities, including:

- Hiking
- Swimming
- Snow Shoeing
- Basketball
- Walley-Ball
- European Handball
- Bocce
- Track and Field activities
- Line dancing
- Frisbee
- Soccer
- Kickball

BeFit offers programming Monday, Tuesday and Thursday morning, and Wednesday afternoon.