'It was like opening up your exam results and saying, “Hey, I did alright here!”': men’s accounts of receiving information on objectively assessed physical activity

Evidence from Football Fans in Training (FFIT)

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Outline of presentation

• Background to study
• Research context – FFIT
• Aim
• Theoretical frame - SDT
• Methods - Qualitative study
• Findings
• Conclusion
**Background**

- **Physical activity (PA)** - important for health and wellbeing; vital in long-term weight control (Catennaci et al., 2007)
- Receiving information on how much PA people are doing may influence behaviour change (Fitzsimons et al., 2013)
- Feedback on PA - a potential tool for enhancing PA?
- Understandings of how people respond to PA feedback is limited – does it help or hinder attempts to change?
- PhD research: an opportunity to research these questions amongst men who had taken part in weight management programme – **Football Fans in Training**
Research context: Football Fans In Training (FFIT)

- **12-week, group-based weight management programme** for overweight/obese men (BMI≥28kg/m²) aged 35-65yrs delivered in professional football clubs
- **Designed to appeal to men:** context, content and style of delivery
- **RCT showed effectiveness and cost-effectiveness**
- **RCT – WL 12-months from baseline** (primary outcome)

(see Gray et al, 2013; Hunt et al, 2014 a and b)
To understand men’s responses to receiving **personalised objective feedback on changes in activity levels** during FFIT

- NB *not provided as part of routine deliveries of FFIT*
Self-Determination Theory

Three Basic Needs

Relatedness  Competence  Autonomy

AMOTIVATION  EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION  INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

Non-regulation  External regulation  Introjected regulation  Identified regulation  Integrated regulation  Intrinsic regulation

Controlled Motivation  Autonomous Motivation

Figure 1. Schematic overview of the Self-Determination Continuum. Adapted from Ryan and Deci (2000)
Methods

Example - PA Feedback Letter Post-Programme

SPL Football Fans in Training (FFIT):
Physical Activity Monitoring Feedback Letter

Thursday, 17 May 2012

Dear...

We are really pleased you took part in the FFIT programme. We hope that the programme has helped you to feel better in your day to day life and to achieve the goals that you set for yourself.

Thank you very much indeed for helping with our research to measure objectively your physical activity.

In this letter we are sending you some personal feedback on what the ActivPAL showed about your physical activity levels. The information from the ActivPAL is able to show you precisely how active you were throughout each of the days that you wore it. The first table on the next page shows the information the ActivPAL measured before you started the programme and after it. It shows that on average you:

- increased your steps by 3952 steps per day;
- decreased the amount of time you spent sitting or lying down by 53 minutes;
- increased the time you spent stepping by 36 minutes;
- increased time spent standing by 12 minutes; and
- increased your energy expenditure by 1.6 METs.

Well done!

The graphs on the next page show all of this information in a different way. The amount of time you spent sitting or lying is shown in yellow below the axis and time spent standing (green) or stepping (red) is shown above the axis.
Post-programme feedback

Positive reactions: competence supportive

Men who could interpret the information and were successful in achieving weight loss/behaviour change were most positive about feedback – described as ‘proof’ of capacity to transform their lifestyles/bodies.

“I was really, really happy because it showed a big, big significant change in what I'd done [...] so that made me feel even better about myself that I can do it” (Alex)

Consistent with SDT the feedback enhanced confidence in the men’s ability to sustain behaviour change beyond the programme - ‘competence supportive’
The feedback was of significant interest and held intrinsic value which was used by some men as a further tool for behaviour change.

"I could see the relevance of it. [...] I was more active during certain times of the day. [...] it’s more about integrating that and for me it was relatively easy to do [...] because I was losing weight and I was achieving milestones” (Frank)

The feedback was personally meaningful and provided further options to choose when to increase PA - ‘autonomy supportive’
Post-programme feedback

Positive reactions: relatedness support

Receiving **ongoing personalised communication** through receipt of the external post-programme **feedback** was experienced by some as **motivating/enjoyable**

“**Somebody else has seen you on the journey [...] an’ [and] just say you know, ‘well done’ [...] it’s just a human reaction [...] people are still thinking aboot [about] it an’ [and] you’re still thinkin’ yourself [...] it keeps you sorta motivated”** (Billy)

Ensured the men continued to feel valued/acknowledged as individuals and connected to the programme - ‘relatedness supportive’
Minority of men who **did not achieve** weight loss/behaviour change were less **enthusiastic**, experiencing **feedback** as confirmation of their **lack of success**

“**it’s reinforcing again your lack of activity** [...] **it’s showing you how inactive you are** [...] **inactiveness is to do with modern society in which we live in**” (Alan)

Feedback consolidated **external barriers** to increasing PA perceived as **insurmountable**. Undermined feelings of **competence** and **autonomy** – ‘amotivating’
Some men struggled to make sense of the information, perceiving it as too complex/irrelevant – feedback was not viewed as useful aid for behaviour change. Included men who had and had not achieved weight loss/behaviour change.

"to me it was quite a gimmicky thing. [...] especially guys my age [...], [because] some of us are [not] as computer minded [...] I would need somebody [...] going through that and can actually tell you what you’re doing and then suggesting an alternative“ (Jonathan)

Feedback less useful as could not recognise how it related to their own PA. Inability to interpret the information undermined competence/autonomy.
Reactions to post-programme feedback in relation to tenets of SDT

- Not useful
- Dissatisfied
- Positive reactions

- Relatedness
- Competence
- Autonomy

Need Supportive
Need Suppressive
Conclusion

- Feedback on changes in PA may increase longer term behaviour change for those already successful but undermine motivation for those who are not.
- Greater sensitivity/support necessary when providing PA feedback to individuals unable to successfully change behaviour.
- Simplification/tailoring required to ensure optimal understanding and utility of information.
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