

Getting Those Who Are Not Active, Active, Using Behavioural Science Referral Techniques

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Introduction

This framework has been developed to utilise the Referral Paper “The Consideration & Application Of Referring Others To Take Part In Physical Activity”

(<https://ca20.black/2022/06/03/how-to-get-referrals>) in order to encourage inactive individuals to become active. Though fundamentally the idea is to instigate some practical outputs that will lead to significant improvements in take up of physical activity across all socioeconomic groups. The referral techniques will be biased towards the most dominant behaviour change attribute from EAST, which is Easy i.e. how do we make referrals easy for someone to make.

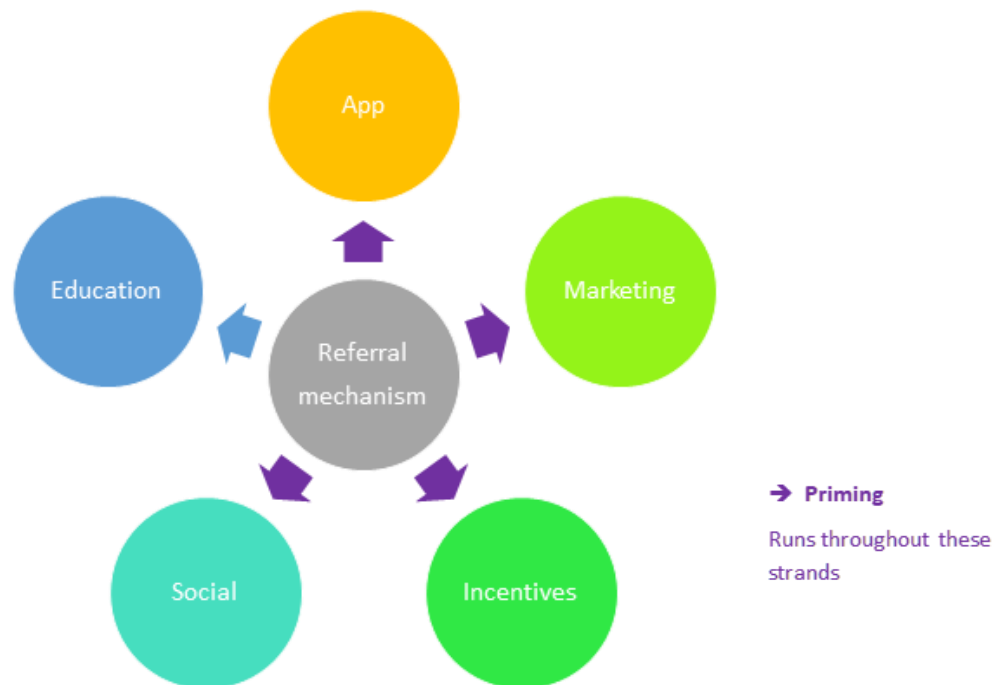
The actual techniques will be aligned with the Jōbu initiative to motivate people to get and stay active. One of the key underpinnings of this work is the idea of ‘health by stealth’, following research that suggests people are more likely to be active if the primary outcome is not to exercise but to socialise with, or support others (Harris, Crone, Hughes & Bird, 2022

(<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0263414>). This research reflects Jōbu’s prioritisation of referral techniques, which are reliant upon social interactions. This focus is derived from the vast evidence that social influence is influential to both developing and maintaining a behaviour such as physical activity, as discussed in the Referral Paper.

The framework provides methods upon which Jōbu/Trainers/Coaches can look to influence referral behaviour. Below we have illustrated the 5 components that form the framework which we will focus on to implement effective referral mechanisms to encourage more people to get and stay active. In addition to the components we provide practical examples, from both a general and a Jōbu specific perspective, that can be applied to the aims and circumstances outlined.

The platforms for delivering the behaviour change techniques are; Incentives (extrinsic and intrinsic), Mobile Apps (e.g. Jōbu), Marketing, Education, Social & Personal Behaviour. Priming techniques will support all of the components with the exception of Education.

It is important, in all of these platforms, that we don’t tell people what to do and instead invite people to change so that referring others to social physical activity is a self-determined choice.



Incentives

People are more likely to engage in something if they want to do so. Incentives play a large role in behaviour change by providing motivation for engaging in a behaviour. Individuals will generally be motivated either intrinsically (internal desire) or extrinsically (external demand) and incentives can harness these.

- Financial – financial incentives are shown to be successful motivators for behaviour. Examples of this includes; cash rewards for making a referral, vouchers, or credits for a chosen charity on the Jōbu app. Amazon vouchers were trialled at Jōbu and resulted in an upturn in referrals (11% more clients in 2 weeks). Another financial incentive is to have a single person price and a lower price per person if they come in a group.
- Emotional - emotional incentives reflect the fact people are motivated by experience and values, or more directly, will the incentive make them feel something.
 - Extrinsic examples of this include; branded (sustainable) water bottles as a reward for someone who makes a successful referral. Other examples of giveaway incentives that promote social wellbeing could include; coffee cups, plant pots, seeds, mindfulness journal, tote bag, cuddly toys, t-shirts. These should be aligned with the Trainer's/Group's values and include the groups colours/logo/tag line. Such as t-shirts relating to the groups chosen charity. Eg. 'Moving for Mind with Jōbu'
 - Intrinsic examples of this include; Encouraging the taking part and bringing friends, reminding participants they are part of a team, mutual support of progress, recognition from the group for developing the team, listening to newly learned knowledge and purpose (specifically why social physical activity is a good thing), all help people feel good about themselves, improving self esteem and confidence.

- Prizes – prizes can be given for reaching defined goals or in competition e.g. 5 referrals, who can give out the most flyers... Prizes can also be given randomly and unexpectedly. People love nice surprises. Examples include; recognition, certificate, vouchers, cake, merchandise. The group (eg. Saturday Superstars) which make the most successful referrals that season (e.g. Winter) get a prize. They should always be celebrated both during the physical activity session and, if possible, away from the session at a clubhouse, restaurant/pub, coffee shop.
- Trainers/Coaches (incentivise the Trainer/Coach) – opportunity to promote 121 Trainer/coaching sessions e.g. if you bring a friend, get a free/discounted personal training session with me.
- Loyalty card – “...get 10 referrals and £50 will be donated by the trainer/club to a charity of your choice...” or some other prize. One of the most important nudges used by Loyalty cards is that the card holder must start with at least one stamp!
- Reverse Psychology - Reverse psychology, also known as psychological reactance, is a social influence tactic that encourages people to act the opposite of what it is suggested. Reverse psychology incentives are based on reverse psychology marketing, meaning that you highlight what the product does badly in order to highlight what it does well. Examples include; World's worst introvert, Least unfriendly,...
- Social/network opportunities
 - Link with local businesses e.g. if there is coffee shop nearby encourage teas/coffees afterwards at the place and develop a joint reward such as 10 sessions get a free coffee/cake
 - Link with a local charity e.g. Fundraising or support (emotional/intrinsic)
 - Credits towards 'merchandise/charity/...' gained by your referral for attending sessions will also be added to your credits.
 - Most likes e.g. participants which give the most likes in 'month' get a 'prize'

Naming your referral program – a referral program should form part of a Trainers business. To ensure participants are aware of your program, giving it a memorable name will help e.g. 'Friends With Benefits', BAM (Bring A Mate),...

Marketing

Marketing in this sense is considering how we can prompt and nudge members, Trainers and non-members to engage in physical activity sessions.

This is a primary function to any business which allows us to build relationships with (potential) service users and share messaging that aligns to business values. Generally speaking, marketing can occur online – virtually, or in person - physically. Marketing can increase awareness as well as engage current members in meaningful messages, which could motivate referral behaviour.

- Online
 - Have more of a presence on social media, FB, Instagram and TikTok specifically. Post regular engaging content that shows people what it's like to be part of the group, what to expect from a session, and some of the benefits e.g. social coffee at the end.
 - Align social media to awareness events e.g. wellbeing week talk about how group exercise impacts wellbeing, or love parks week, promote this and outdoor exercise. Also let members know about these events and find a challenge for them to do relating to

- exercising with others e.g. walk round the park with your friend or family member, talk to them about your group exercise session. Use events such as Mothers Day!
 - Create a monthly newsletter which includes; insightful info, awareness event(s), role model case study, app updates, new members (a little background),...
 - Target referral messaging dependent on chosen charities and links to events e.g. 'know your numbers week'. 'This week is Heart Charity know your numbers week, why not show your support by encouraging a friend to join Jōbu and raise money for charity or if you know someone with high blood pressure why not bring them down to a session to support them reduce theirs'.
 - Use injunctive norms - 'The group are grateful when people bring friends or family along' or 'By bringing friends along you are promoting social, physical and mental wellbeing' or 'Charities thank you for inviting more people to be a part of this', or 'Members who have joined after being referred are enjoying their workouts'
 - Use examples of the reviews on your site e.g. 'Easy to book, easy to connect' as a way of promoting the app to others
 - Images - Friends working out together
 - Role models – create a monthly 'Superhero of the Month' - this could be based on a range of things including referrals, meeting goals, attendances, enthusiasm etc. Include examples of how people have successfully referred.
 - On the app and online describe the sessions as a social experience e.g. 'Friendly get together' to encourage the social motivations ahead of exercise.
- Physical
 - Polo shirts with QR codes and participants Referral code.
 - Business cards with messaging about the benefits of bringing a friend.
 - Flyers/posters/banners around parks, community centres, libraries, leisure centres, coffee shops, hairdressers, newsagents with bring a friend messaging.
 - University 'Freshers week' campaign, emphasize groups (£10/person or £7/person if you come in a group of 5).
 - Local events, fun days, fetes – be there, provide free sessions.

Social & Personal Behaviour

One of the biggest reasons to take part in physical activity or to join a club is to develop relatedness. This is inherent in human nature. This reflects how we can utilise the natural social nature of the people (members, PTs) we have engaged. This specifically relates to the individuals already engaged and the role they can play in promoting the offer as opposed to the organisation itself.

Helping the group develop their social capital is an important part of the trainer's role. This includes encouraging inclusivity and diversity in the group. To help the group develop their social network it is important to help them increase their social connections. This could mean that the members share messages through their friendship group about physical activity opportunities, or consider the influence their behaviours already have on colleagues.

You will have 'super referrers' or 'role models' in the group, usually the most gregarious/most outgoing, who are likely to bring the most referrals. Identify and support these 'super referrers' as they have a very important role in the group. Maybe give them responsibility to be the 'Social Captain'.

Encourage a sense of belonging to a group/club with an interestingly named social media group, t-shirts and other merchandise. Maybe a tag line decided on by the participants. Promote local activity challenges eg. Race for life – sign up as a team (could be sent out as part of a newsletter and links into charity credits). Referrals are then encouraged by the opportunity to be part of a group/club with a great ethos and values.

Activities to develop referrals through pro-social behaviour include;

- Ask members to refer others - even better, ask them to make a commitment to referring others, maybe set a target ... share this with peers.
- Referral T-shirt, business cards - make sure Trainer's demonstrate this behaviour by wearing/using them.
- Trainer's to notice which new people have been referred and acknowledge the referral/referrer in front of others .
- If someone new turns up to a session let them know it is normal for people to bring friends (/what proportion of attendees have made referrals).
- WhatsApp, Facebook – share photos of the group together online and encourage re-shares/tag members in.
- Charity event as a group.
- Create a set of 'Values' that are covered with participants e.g. support everyone, go at your own pace, bring friends (this could be communicated either in the session as an intro or online when they sign up for a session)
- Trainers – remember to provide reviews/feedback for the participants. If you show interest in them, then when you ask for referrals they are more likely to respond.

Education

This function relates to increasing the understanding and knowledge about physical activity, it's benefits and the role referrals can play.

- Workshops – Use our content to create your own or work with Jōbu to offer workshops to your participants/business/club/local businesses. Jōbu workshops are already offered through YMCAfit, UK Coaching to Trainer/Coaches/Sports Clubs and also to employees (usually via the HR department).
- Website/ 'Knowledge Base' - Use our communication tools to direct users to the Jōbu Knowledge Base where there are several articles about how social physical activity benefits the group.
- Develop knowledge base articles based on user interests, this will be known by analysing goals e.g. are these predominantly social, mental, or physical? Focus content on what appeals to your users.
- Infographics, again available from the Jōbu Knowledge Base.
- Images – these need to be reflective on intersectionality in society.
- 'Did you know...' messages (...in the Jōbu app)

- Social Media – share Blogs on the social benefits of physical activity with your participants. In fact sharing any educational material about physical activity will keep you in mind and easy for participants to share. Feel free to use our content @jobustraining

Mobile Apps

Apps can play a significant role in aligning user personal values to the Trainers/Jōbu values, such as mental and social wellbeing, goal setting (behavioural) and supporting charity. The Jōbu app is a great tool for helping people to get and stay active.

One of the key functions of an app is the ability to send notifications, these could be for reinforcement, reminders, promotion and information, which can act as nudges or framing tools for behaviour. In addition to notifications the way the app is laid out and the functionality can encourage referrals to seem easy, or attractive. Some examples of implementation are below:

- Prompt/remind those who have a referral goal of the time they have remaining to achieve it.
- Provide feedback on how users are doing in relation to their goals.
- In the app make sure there are referral goals that are offered in goal setting selection - possibly go one step further and consider adding 'social goals' as a specific heading e.g. at Jōbu we value the social benefits of exercise – how will you help someone you know get more active this week?
- Make the first goal on the list a referral goal, which would need to be actively changed if they want to select a different goal.
- Default the behaviour goal setting choice to a referral one so the individual needs to actively choose another if not that one (the first one users see will be 'Invite x to join in?')
- Provide feedback on achievement or progress to a referral goal eg. if they have committed to 2 referrals in 1 month, let them know when they are half way there.
- Weekly 'Did you know' pop up that includes priming messages (see section on Priming)
- Allow referrals to be made directly through Facebook, WhatsApp etc. E.g. 'invite a friend now' function.
- If a reward is set (see Incentives) send reminders/notifications through the app that you can get x for making a referral. (Offer the opportunity for individuals to choose their own prize).

Priming

Priming is much like planting a seed and then allowing users to reach a behaviour based on their own volition. This means providing some information that may lead to the reframing of one's views on group exercise for example, which may allow them to view the behaviour more positively than they had before.

- Sharing information about the benefits of bringing a friend to take part helps participants understand why referring others is not only good for the wellbeing of their friend but also for themselves and the local community.
- Business cards/flyers/posters/banners around parks, community centres, sports centres, schools/Universities that host sessions with messaging about the benefits of bringing a friend all contribute to helping people understand that social physical activity is more fun.

- Asking participants to freely discuss their physical activity sessions with friends and how enjoyable it is. Particularly when an 'event' occurs, either with a friend/family member, or in the media eg. Illness, completing a marathon, keeping up with kids, charity event...
- The emphasis of the message should be social and fun, ahead of, although not to the exclusion of, the physical health benefits, as these are the main reasons people take part.
- Avoid using negative social proof.

Examples of priming messaging that could be used within the components of the referral model;

- Some people find it difficult to stay active, exercising with others helps. Can you help someone out and bring them along to your next session?
- Research shows that exercising with a friend keeps you motivated for longer.
- People who's family are active are more likely to be active themselves.
- Joining a group of people who share a common interest or purpose can jump start efforts to enhance our social connections.
- Playing tennis not only influences your direct friend to join in, it influences your friends' friends' and your friends', friends', friends.
- The majority of people in the UK are physically active!
- Social physical activity increases confidence.
- One of the best gifts you can give a family member, friend or colleague is helping them improve their physical, mental and social wellbeing.
- You can learn to better concentrate and engage with people when you are active.
- One of the most well studied social benefits of exercise is boosted mood.
- Those who take part in physical activity exhibit more trust and prosocial behaviours than those who do not.
- Do you want to make a difference to your friend's life?
- Do you want to make a difference to your local community?
- Don't miss out on the health benefits of being physically active, they are free!
- Anticipated regret – I know I will feel guilty if I don't go, how will you feel if you don't reach your goal? If I don't go, I will be letting my friends down?
- Make it easy to share wins with friends and family e.g. if someone achieves their weight loss or distance goal, share this online?/celebrate with friends?
- If someone has met their goals encourage them to share these on social media / Jōbu to share 'weekly wins' on social media

Appendix - Messaging

Examples of general messaging that could be used within the components of the referral model;

- We all know someone who doesn't know where to start, help them out and bring them along next week
- If you're new to [area] why not join [group name] and meet new people
- Ready to move more? Join our group exercise sessions here [link]
- Know someone who's feeling a bit low? Bring them along to a session and put a smile on their face
- Covid taught us the importance of getting out, moving and spending time with friends. Share the joy of Jōbu sessions now

- Refer a friend this week and watch your charity reap the rewards
- Were you recommended a new series this week? Return the favour and recommend Jōbu /one of our classes
- It only takes 30 seconds to encourage your friend to make a positive step and enjoy moving outside with us
- Some people find it difficult to stay active, exercising with others helps, help someone out and bring them along next week
- Want to keep healthy for longer, bring a friend!
- Mum taught me to walk. I taught her to run. (This Girl Can)
- A healthy way to spend time with the family. (This Girl Can)
- A good way to catch up with friends or meet new people. (This Girl Can)
- Every move enables more. Even building small amounts of activity into your day can help you make the most of the little things in life. (We Are Undefeatable)
- When living with a health condition, getting active can be challenging when how you feel can change from day-to-day, but even one step more is a step in the right direction. (We Are Undefeatable)