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# spa | stress management and wellness coaching in the spa

by Cynthia Ackrill, M.D.

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**WHAT IF YOU COULD HELP YOUR** clients take more of the “aahhh” home from the spa? What if you could really empower them to transform their lifestyles?

According to the Global Spa and Wellness Summit, health promotion is a market that offers the biggest opportunities for future business. The paradigm is finally shifting, with individuals becoming more proactive about their own well-being. Spas are uniquely positioned to be a part of and even lead the trend. The level of stress in society today is driving business to spas as more people seek out ways to decompress.

Many spa therapists, excited by their own wellness paths, are coaching their clients on how to lead healthier lives. The most important part—the culture of health promotion, is already in place. Spas that have extended services into stress management and wellness coaching are enjoying positive results.

So why is the spa a good place to start lasting behavior change? When clients decide to seek a spa service—whether it is a deep tissue massage or a cosmetic improvement—they are already moving in the direction of self-care. At this point, they are primed to start the process of going beyond symptomatic relief to proactive change. Spa services decrease physiological stress levels and increase awareness of the mind, body and spirit, facilitating their integration. If spas then offer these primed clients targeted assessments, education and coaching support, the recipe for true motivation and change is complete.

The challenge is deciding just how to go down this road. How do you bring clarity to your vision for wellness offer-

ings? How do you narrow your focus from the overwhelming number of options? How do you ensure quality and avoid quacks, liabilities and pitfalls? How do you guarantee a return on investment for brand extension?

Mismanaged stress is a factor behind the reason for 70 to 90 percent of medical appointments. It robs people of energy, focus, productivity and happiness. Helping your clients understand this connection and manage their day-to-day stress or lifestyle choices can have a huge impact! Brand that vision into every step.

Now approach the “how.” The broad range of available options starts

## WELLNESS SERVICE POSSIBILITIES:

- Wellness assessments
- Wellness coaching for individuals and groups
- Wellness workshops and retreats
- Stress assessments
- Stress coaching
- Stress workshops and retreats
- Expert-led educational events
- Breathwork clinics
- Biofeedback services
- Community outreach events
- Corporate workshops, events and retreats
- Themed travel retreats
- Membership programs
- Social media group support

with a simple offer of a specific new stress management service, and goes as far as becoming an integrative wellness destination, a place of transformational healing. What if each client begins their spa experience with a wellness and stress assessment, identifying their particular challenges and interests? This plants a seed of motivation, and the spa is branded in their commitment to the overall well-being of their clients.

You could offer a range of package options for clients, such as spa services and educational events to address their unique needs, or an opportunity to meet with a certified coach to design personal goals. As you can imagine, the possibilities are limitless. The keys to making this a successful venture are the same as those for creating lasting behavior change: clarity of vision and strategic planning, a strong brand (or self-concept) that informs every decision, proactive obstacle planning, quality support (a good team) and a firm commitment to a process that encompasses research, flexibility and continued learning. Dream big, plan well and be the spa that engages and supports clients in achieving true well-being—all while increasing profits! ■

*Cynthia Ackrill, M.D., is the owner of WellSpark, a company specializing in leadership development. As a coach, consultant and speaker, she works with leaders, teams and spa owners. Dr. Ackrill applies her training in wellness and executive coaching to deliver innovative change management to increase health, performance, profits and happiness.*