

## “Do I Get It?” – Program Overview and Expectations

### Intentions of the Strength ABCs Program

1. To adequately screen breast cancer survivors post-treatment who are interested in doing the Strength ABCs program to determine whether they can safely participate in the weightlifting program.
2. To educate breast cancer survivors regarding:
  - a. Lymphedema
    - i. Lymph system anatomy/physiology/function
    - ii. Adequate training of lymphatic therapists
    - iii. Risk reduction
    - iv. Exercise and lymphedema (the evidence base, including PAL)
    - v. Air travel
    - vi. Standard of care for treatment
  - b. Other common adverse sequelae of breast cancer treatment
  - c. The usefulness of exercise for prevention, treatment, attenuation, rehabilitation, amelioration of common adverse treatment effects
3. To educate breast cancer survivors regarding:
  - a. The appropriate performance of each of the elements of the Strength ABCs program (or a substitute exercise for the same muscle group, if needed)
  - b. Appropriate set up and biomechanics for each exercise
  - c. The concepts of ‘sets,’ ‘repetitions,’ and ‘progression’
  - d. The importance of logging exercise
  - e. Self-awareness for altered symptoms
  - f. Where/whom to call if there is a change in symptoms that lasts a week or longer
  - g. The concept of ‘overall arm work’
  - h. HOW to progress the weights, including backing off the resistance after an ‘exercise holiday’
  - i. The concepts of ‘start low, progress slow, let symptoms be your guide’
  - j. Doing the exercises 2x weekly – or at most, every OTHER day
4. To motivate patients to do the exercise twice weekly as a long-term habit
  - a. Motivational interviewing techniques
  - b. Other behavior-change approaches you may have learned
5. To invite patients to return to you for a follow-up session periodically (frequency may vary according to need)
6. To ensure that participants demonstrate the items in #3 above independently before graduation from the program

### **Expectations of the trainer who delivers the group exercise classes:**

1. Teach each element of the program
2. Motivate women to do the program
3. Ensure that participants develop the skills needed to graduate the program (see below)
4. Discuss logistics and problem-solve where needed

### **Expectations of the program participants prior to graduation from the program:**

(Graduation means participant is ready to do the exercises independently in a gym or at home)

1. Complete the evaluation with clearance to proceed
2. Complete the Lymphedema Education Session
3. Complete the four guided group exercise sessions
4. Identify how participant will progress the weights (discuss logistics with instructor)  
Options: PowerBlocks, dumbbells, gym membership. If it's a gym membership, identify HOW participant will learn to use the equipment at their gym with outstanding biomechanical form
5. Demonstrate independence with regard to
  - a. The vital importance of REGULAR adherence to the program (the problems associated with stopping and starting)
  - b. Proper biomechanics and order of exercises
  - c. The concepts of 'sets,' 'reps,' and progression of weights
  - d. The importance of progression
  - e. Logging exercise sessions
  - f. Awareness of symptom changes and who/when/where to call with a change that lasts a week or longer
  - g. When to come back to see you or their PT/OT, CLT
  - h. What to do if the participant sustains a new injury
  - i. Frequency of the exercise program (2x weekly or no more than every other day)
  - j. The concepts of:
    - i. Overall arm work
    - ii. Start low, progress slow, let symptoms be your guide
    - iii. Backing off after an 'exercise holiday'
    - iv. Awareness of symptom changes
    - v. Regular adherence