

Katie Johnson: Good morning and welcome to Apple a Day, Lake Region Healthcare's health and wellness show, where we feature news and information you can use to live a healthier life. I am Katie Johnson; your host and my guest today is Natalie Knutson. She's the director of wellness here at Lake Region Healthcare and a regular guest of ours, and here to talk to us about next week's Living Well series program. Good morning, Natalie.

Natalie Knutson: Hey, Katie. How are you?

Katie Johnson: I am well. I am excited to share with our listeners what we have in store for the April session of Living Well. As you might recall, we do this every month from September through May. Invite our community into the clinic lobby to learn about all kinds of different topics, and dimensions of wellness, hear from experts, hear from patients. The April session is coming up next Monday night, already. Give us a little hint about what it will be about.

Natalie Knutson: Yeah, Katie. I'm actually really excited to be able to bring this one to the public and be able to talk about it a little more in depth of what we're doing here at Lake Region. It's been a four-year process leading up to this program that we've put into place and we're just excited to be able to continue to share it with the community and talk about all the success that has come out of it.

Katie Johnson: For sure. We're talking about lifestyle medicine, which might sound like maybe an ambiguous term or might not be familiar to people. What do you mean when you say lifestyle medicine or how do you define lifestyle medicine?

Natalie Knutson: Yeah. I think this is a fairly new concept to our area, in general, and is something that a lot of healthcare facilities are taking a look at, I think. I think I'm safe to say that we're a leader here by being able to offer this service. It really dates back to like, 400 B.C. and they just talk about the importance of nourishing your body with the right foods and moving. So, that's kind of the basic concept behind it, just using lifestyle changes, shaping up the way that you're eating, the things that you're drinking, talk about physical activity, stress is a huge one.

We're learning more and more about the impacts of our long work days, and the stress, and the things that we put on our plates. You know and try to accomplish and it's okay to take a step back. So, we're going to chat a little bit about that. Talk about just healthy relationships. There's so much that goes into it and I think, you know, kind of going back to those seven components of wellness, that's essentially what lifestyle medicine is.

Katie Johnson: And it's about more than just doing those things because they'll make you feel better, it's actually medicine.

Natalie Knutson: It's medicine. There's a ton of research behind it. I mean, if you hop on Google and you type in lifestyle medicine, not only is it preventative, but for those people suffering from chronic diseases and some risk factors, things can be

reversed. Diabetes can be reversed. Hypertension, high cholesterol, those are all things that you can get off medication by making change.

Katie Johnson: We have a lot of doctors, here on our staff, doctors and advanced practice professionals, who are actually a part of this program, and who are writing prescriptions for this, right? Share a little bit more about it works.

Natalie Knutson: Sure. I mean, it's really simple. We want it to be really streamlined. We don't want you to have to go through a bunch of hoops to be able to participate. So, just a simple call to your physician, to your physician's nurse. You don't need to pay for a visit to get the referral. The referral is sent over to us, the wellness trainers over at the Health and Wellness Hub, and we essentially get you started. We schedule you. It's all by appointment. There's no set program. There's no cookie-cutter itinerary that you're going to be taken through. It is all individualized. We meet you where you're at and get you started.

Katie Johnson: The program on Monday will talk about those kind of basic pieces, but they're also going to include some actual stories of patients who are seeing results from implementing lifestyle medicine. Tell us a little bit more about who's going to be speaking on Monday.

Natalie Knutson: Yeah. So, I think it's pretty safe to say that we've seen a number of clients come through the program. This is our fourth year, so there's many many success stories that are out there. We've asked two of our current participants if they would be willing to speak. Rod Scheel is going to be speaking and then Sue Bakken. Both of them came to us with different agenda's.

Rod's was, you know, "I'm retired now. I want to just keep going. I've been active, but I feel I'm losing it a little bit." So, just building up strength, confident balance. To be able to continue doing the things that he enjoys. Sue, comes to us for more of a functional standpoint and she'll talk about just maybe some life things that kind of got in the way or were barriers to her. Now, you know, kind of plowing through a little bit of that and just building up strength and feeling good again. So, a lot of it is just, let's keep going.

Katie Johnson: Yeah. So, it's always great to hear those stories from patients. I'd like you to touch a little bit more too on you mentioned, this is four years in the making, so far here. There have been a number of you at the Health and Wellness Hub and on the medical staff who've actually invested in time and training. Can you tell us about what you've done to prepare Lake Region Healthcare to be on the leading edge of lifestyle medicine?

Natalie Knutson: Yep. So, you know, when we kind of first heard this concept, we were actually in a training called motivational interviewing. It's just a different way to communicate and I know a lot of members in the community have participated in such a thing. Rather than asking just cut and dry questions, it's coming in and being able to have a conversation. It kind of gets us thinking out of the box.

Change talk is a big one of, you know, just getting us to think more positively and how can we accomplish this? And so, it's very client led. And so, from there, we had heard about this concept and so, I brought it to Lake Region Healthcare and said, "What do you think about this?" So, we did a pilot, initially with Dr. Peterson and Dr. Welly in our behavioral health unit. It was working. We thought, "Wow, this is something that we can actually do."

So, Dr. Welly and I then kind of took the next step and we went out to Boston to the Lifestyle Medicine Academy and went to a training out there and just came back so inspired and with a wealth of information of, "Oh my goodness, this is ... we can totally do this." We got the referral system a little bit more streamlined. Got a few more physicians on board so kind of started to bring in more clients and hearing more and more success stories.

In the meantime, Caroline and I, one of the other trainers went to a conference called, Exercise is Medicine. They referred to it as EIEM. This is a concept that just kind of aligns itself well with lifestyle medicine and Exercise is Medicine is just, you know, really talking about that physical activity piece. If you don't change anything else in your life, but you start moving, that can have such a huge impact. So, even if you're not losing the weight, but you're moving, huge impact.

We are both certified in that area, as well. We've also taken the next steps in our personal training certification to work with a special population. That was, you know, just higher risk factors, people coming in, and our goal is to keep everybody safe. The more that we can learn and the more that we teach our participants coming in about their own health, the better.

Yeah, it's a work in progress and it's an evolving area so there's always new information, and there's always new ideas to bring to the table. We love new ideas and that's how we grow, and we grow together as a community. How better can serve you, is kind of what we're always looking for.

Katie Johnson: Monday nights, Living Well session, will be a great chance for people to learn more about how it's evolving. It makes me also think about the expansion of the special programs that we have, like Rock, Steady, Boxing, which we're going to feature on this show in a couple of months too. Those things all really tie together, don't they?

Natalie Knutson: They do. Yeah, I mean, it's interesting because we have those specialized programs, but again, it all comes back to, we're working on our nutrition, we're working on our eating, we're working on stress, we're trying to sleep better, and they all just fall into place together. So, yeah, it's pretty exciting.

Katie Johnson: It is. It's exciting to think about how we can improve the health of our community with actions different than just medicines, and surgeries, and corrective things. Again, it's this Monday night, 5:45 in the Lake Region

Healthcare clinic lobby on West Vernon Avenue. Wrapped up by 7:00 so just a little over an hour of your time, but we promise you'll come away with a wealth of information and a new understanding of lifestyle medicine. How can people RSVP or learn more? We offer refreshments, so that's the reason we ask for RSVP's, right?

Natalie Knutson: Yeah. An RSVP is not necessary. I mean, if it comes down to that day and you kind of, remember, "Oh my gosh, that's tonight." Come, for sure. If you can RSVP, that's very helpful. So, just wellnes@lrhc.org or you can give us a call at 218-736-8451 and we'll put you on the list.

Katie Johnson: Great. Perfect. So, again, the Living Well series April session is lifestyle medicine this coming Monday, April 9th, 5:45 at the clinic lobby. We hope to see lots of you there. Natalie Knutson, the director of wellness at Lake Region Healthcare, my guest today, as we invite you all to the Living Well series next Monday at Lake Region Healthcare. Katie and Natalie, both reminding you there's so much to do here, stay healthy for it. Have a great day.