

## Evidence-Based Cancer Control Programs (EBCCP) Connection



September 2022

### Featured Program

#### Youth Fit 4 Life

Designed to improve dietary habits, this intervention includes an educational lecture series with health risk assessments, textbooks and workbooks, and an alumni support organization that helps adults maintain dietary and exercise goals. The study showed various dietary improvements (such as an increase in fruit and vegetable consumption) and a decrease in body mass index (BMI), weight, and body fat percentage.

Do you have questions about how to implement the program? [View the program's materials or contact the developer to learn more.](#)

### Spotlight

#### Meet the Developer



Jim Annesi, PhD

Dr. James Annesi was recently appointed Vice President of Health Initiatives for the Central Coast YMCA, Monterey, CA. He is also Professor at The University of Alabama at Birmingham: School of Health Professions, and Adjunct Research Faculty at California State University, Monterey Bay: College of Health Sciences and Human Services. His earlier research, faculty, and clinical positions were at Rutgers: The State University of New Jersey, The University of Georgia, The Veterans Affairs NJ Health Care System, Kennesaw State University, Elizabeth General Medical Center, Enhanced Performance Technologies, and the YMCA of Metro Atlanta. He is an elected Fellow of the American Academy of Health Behavior, The Obesity Society, and the American Psychological Association (in the divisions of health psychology, behavior analysis, and exercise/sport/performance psychology). In 2019, Annesi received the American Psychological Association's Excellence in Clinical Health Psychology Award from APA Division 38: Society for Health Psychology.

Dr. Annesi's research program includes over 210 peer-reviewed scientific publications (95% of which he is first or sole author) related to health behavior-change theory and methods applied to exercise adherence, self-regulated eating, weight management, human performance, and the effects of physical activity on mental health, body image, emotional eating, and other quality-of-life factors. He is among the six most-cited U.S. researchers in the categories of "behavioral psychology," "health behavior change," and "exercise psychology." His findings on associations between moderate physical activity, self-regulatory and mood improvements, and eating-behavior changes form the basis of a weight-management treatment paradigm tailored for large-scale applications. This novel intervention has demonstrated high degrees of success with the persistent problem of sustaining reductions in weight and health risks in individuals with obesity.

Annesi also authored four books and over a hundred articles and chapters focused on methods for health-promotion practitioners. They translate his research for wide-ranging clinical applications. His original protocols, which cross age ranges, focus on self-regulatory skills development applied to increasing and maintaining physical activity/exercise, mental health, controlled eating, and weight reduction.

Annesi serves as a contributor/consultant to media outlets such as the Associated Press, New York Times, Translational Behavioral Medicine, London Times, WebMD, and PBS; and is a senior editor for The Permanente Journal and on the editorial board of Health Behavior Research. In an earlier career, Annesi was among the several youngest members of the United States Professional Tennis Association to obtain Master Professional status and conducted applied research on anxiety regulation methods to maximize sport performance at collegiate, Olympic, and professional levels.

**What aspects of Youth Fit 4 Life can be adapted without it losing its effectiveness? Are there specific audiences (beyond those included in the research study) for whom this program could be adapted?**

The primary publication reviewed by EBCCP described a study using Youth Fit 4 Life (YF4L) with children ages 9–12 years. However, there is also a YF4L curriculum for ages 5–8, and the article on that study is also listed in the EBCCP summary. This version of YF4L was tested over 9 months. The protocol for both versions can easily be adapted to use in physical education or camp settings or to supplement sport activities that might have considerable sedentary time (e.g., baseball). Great care for age appropriateness was taken in the 3.5-year development of the YF4L, so I would caution against its use with adolescents beyond 13–14 years old or prior to age 5.

**What do you view as the facilitators to implementation?**

One facilitator is having staff with at least some interest in health and well-being. Because some people who want to provide afterschool care do not have an interest in health and well-being, the job description for staff should include responsibilities for carefully administering YF4L and interview questions should address this component of the position. Given the protocol nature of YF4L, regular fidelity (or quality assurance) checks are built into the process and are required for successful implementation. That being said, professional physical education staff are not needed for successful implementation.

**Does your team provide implementation support?**

Regardless of venue, improvements in physical activity, overweight/obesity, and diet are obvious outcome measures. The protocol's theoretical foundation concentrates on facilitating self-efficacy through empowering an array of self-regulatory skills to overcome barriers to desirable behaviors. These should also be assessed and used to evaluate the generalization of increased physical activity and healthy eating well beyond the confines of the YF4L program. For help with an evaluation model, especially to help implementers meet conditions of external support, such as grant requirements, please contact the developer: [jamesannes@gmail.com](mailto:jamesannes@gmail.com).

**What is your current research focused on?**

My current research program is focused on exercise adherence, the physical activity–mood change relationship and how it affects body image and emotional eating, and the effects of exercise on maintained weight loss (through its associated psychosocial changes rather than just caloric expenditure). Although my research program crosses most age groups, there is the consistent theme of empowering individuals with the self-regulatory skills needed to overcome commonly occurring barriers to maintenance. You can read my latest publication (Behavioral Weight Loss and Maintenance: A 25-Year Research Program Informing Innovative Programming) [here](#).

### EBCCP Is Accepting New Programs

The Evidence-Based Cancer Control Programs (EBCCP) website is now accepting new programs! If your intervention has positive outcomes in the areas of breast cancer screening, cervical cancer screening, colorectal cancer screening, diet/nutrition, HPV vaccination, informed decision making, obesity, physical activity, prostate cancer screening, public health genomics, sun safety, survivorship/supportive care, and/or tobacco control, consider submitting your program for inclusion on the EBCCP website. We also ask that you share this call for submissions with your colleague partners. For more information on evidence-based program submission, see ["EBCCP Submission and Review Process: A Guide for Program Developers."](#)

### What Is Your EBCCP Story?

Have you implemented an EBCCP program? Is your program featured on the EBCCP website? Do you have a connection to the EBCCP website? If you answered yes to any of these questions, please use the image below and tweet about your EBCCP story. Be sure to use the hashtag #MyEBCCPStory and follow EBCCP on Twitter (@NCI\_ImplSci).

Also, if you have implemented one of the 202 EBCCP programs and you wish to share your implementation story to be featured as a case study ([Insights from the Cancer Control Field](#)), contact us to be interviewed.

#MyEBCCPStory



### Next Issue

Share the newsletter with your colleagues and peers and stay engaged with us by subscribing to this newsletter! You can also follow us on Twitter (@NCI\_ImplSci) to stay current with EBCCP website updates.

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### Feedback

We want your feedback! Do you like what you see? Do you have any recommendations to improve the EBCCP website? Do you plan to share the website with your colleagues and peers? [Submit your feedback here](#)—we would love to hear from you.