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Preface

As you look through this textbook, you may be thinking, “Holy cow! This is so much information! How am I ever going to learn all of it? And is it even helpful info?”

Whether it’s why setting behavior-based goals are more effective than setting outcome-based goals, or how intra-abdominal pressure affects the pelvic floor, or the importance of bowel health in the postpartum period, or how to talk to a client whose birthing experience didn’t go as planned, once thing is certain: the information included in this manual is all part of understanding, connecting with, serving, and empowering your pre- and postnatal clients and patients.

Yes, you’re going to learn it — and even better, you’re going to practice applying it all. We fully believe in your passion and ability to absorb and implement this information in a meaningful way with your clients and patients. Follow the guidelines provided in this section of the manual, and by the end of this course you will understand:

- How to communicate effectively and be a great coach.
- How a woman changes physically and psychologically from trimester to trimester pregnancy.
- What foundational nutrition, exercise, and rest and recovery practices will help your client have a strong, safe, happy, and healthy pregnancy and postpartum experience, and how to help your client implement them in a way that works for her.
- How a woman changes physically and psychologically through labor, delivery, and the postpartum phase.
- How to assess pre- and postpartum women and write exercise programs that will keep them safe, healthy, and strong.
- How to help your client set actionable goals that align with her current desires, priorities, and resources so that she is just as excited to work with you as you are to work with her.

How the Pre- & Postnatal Coaching Certification Manual is Organized

The certification manual consists of five units:

Unit 1: GGS Coaching

We believe good coaching is the foundation of everything you need to know to implement the information within this textbook in a meaningful way with your clients and patients. Unit 1 covers exactly what you need to know about good coaching, such as:

Why evidence-based practice is important and how to implement it.

- How to build a solid referral network and why it's important.
- How to use Motivational Interviewing with your clients.
- How to help clients take responsibility for their choices.
- How to help clients cultivate success instead of failure.
- How to help clients manage their expectations for better results.

Unit 2: Female Anatomy and Physiology

Understanding female anatomy and physiology and how it changes during and after pregnancy is critical to keeping your clients safe and healthy every step of the way. Unit 2 covers the most important information including:

- What the pelvic floor is, and why it is important.
- How exertion, intra-abdominal pressure, and high-impact exercise affect the pelvic floor.
- Hormonal and metabolic changes during pregnancy, and their implications for exercise.
- Changes to posture, abdominal wall, pelvic floor, respiratory systems, and cardiovascular systems, and their implications for exercise.
- Incontinence, pelvic organ prolapse, pelvic pain, and what a coach needs to know about these conditions.
- Low-back pain, pelvic girdle pain, diastasis recti, and carpal tunnel syndrome, and how to modify exercises to accommodate these conditions.

Unit 3: Setting the Foundation for a Healthy Pregnancy

Setting the foundation for a healthy pregnancy isn't just about good nutrition and smart exercise. A good coach must also understand foundational psychology and rest and recovery during pregnancy in order to help their client have their happiest, healthiest, safest, and strongest pregnancy experience. In Unit 3, you'll learn:

- How mental health affects physical health.
- Prenatal nutrition needs, calories, and foundational habits and skills.
- Supplements, foods to eat in moderation, and foods to avoid.
- Benefits of exercise during pregnancy.
- Elements of a comprehensive prenatal exercise program.
- Benefits of rest and recovery, self-care, stress management, and sleep.

Unit 4: Pregnancy

It's no secret that a woman's body changes throughout pregnancy, from trimester to trimester, week to week, and sometimes day to day. But it's not just her body that changes, her mind and emotions change, too. This means that to be a good coach, you need to understand what your client is experiencing physically and psychologically in each stage of her pregnancy so that you can work with her to adjust her exercise program, nutrition, and rest and recovery to accommodate her changing needs. Unit 4 covers:

- Psychological and physical changes in Trimester 1, and how they impact exercise programming, rest and recovery, and nutrition.
- Psychological and physical changes in Trimester 2, and how they impact exercise programming, rest and recovery, and nutrition.
- Psychological and physical changes in Trimester 3, and how they impact exercise programming, rest and recovery, and nutrition.

Unit 5: Postpartum

While summarizing specifically what postpartum women experience during childbirth and early postpartum is a nearly impossible task, as each experience is unique, you can be certain that she endured physical and psychological stressors throughout childbirth, and you can anticipate that she will incur additional physical and psychological change in the postpartum period. Being a great postpartum coach means understanding these stressors and changes, and understanding how to support your client through them as she recovers, rehabs, and returns to activities she loves. Unit 5 includes:

- All about the birthing process and how it can affect a woman physically and psychologically, including her recovery and return to exercise.

- Postpartum psychological considerations, and how to help your client cope with unrealistic expectations, loss of functionality, and a birth that didn't go as planned.
- How to help your client with rest, recovery, self-care, nutrition, hormones, and stress in the early postpartum period.
- Calorie needs, nutrition concerns while breastfeeding, and bladder and bowel health.
- How to assess postpartum clients.
- Postpartum exercise considerations and concerns.
- Barriers to postpartum exercise, and how to help clients overcome them.
- Postpartum exercise program design for rehab and retraining, return to exercise, and bullet-proofing your client's body.

Appendices

The appendices contain helpful supplementary information including:

- Girls Gone Strong Certified Pre- and Postnatal Coach Code of Ethics
- Lists of food sources for protein, carbs, and fat.
- Supplement information.
- Exercise category breakdowns.
- How to support your clients through miscarriage and infant loss.

Other Learning Tools

CHAPTER SUMMARIES

At the end of each chapter, we summarize the most important points from that chapter offering clarity and confirmation of what you've learned.

CASE STUDIES

With every unit there are multiple relevant case studies where you can see and understand the real-life application of what you just learned.

REFERENCES

We provide a comprehensive list of the references we used to create the content for every chapter of this certification. This allows you to dive deeper and learn more about particular areas of the certification that interest you.

SUPPLEMENTARY LEARNING MATERIALS

This text is designed to be used in conjunction with the other learning tools, including your Pre- & Postnatal Coaching Certification workbook and all of the content your online portal.

WORKBOOK

Along with this textbook, you should have also received its companion workbook that includes open-ended questions and case studies to help you deepen your understanding of the course material, apply what you've learned, and prepare you for the unit exams.

ONLINE PORTAL

You should also have access to an online portal that walks you through exactly what you need to do for each chapter and unit to prepare for the unit exam. Within the online portal, you'll find all the resources listed below, as well as an archives tab, resources tab, bookmark tab, and customer support options.

DEMONSTRATION AND COACHING VIDEOS

Every unit is accompanied by videos that supplement what you'll learn in this textbook, including coaching videos to learn how to modify exercises to accommodate conditions like low-back pain, pelvic girdle pain, and carpal tunnel syndrome, and demonstration videos to learn how to assess diastasis recti on yourself or someone else.

ASSESSMENT TOOLS

You'll have access to multiple assessment tools and forms including the PARmed-X for pregnancy, a postpartum assessment form, and a daily assessment tool to help you determine a client's readiness for exercise each day.

WORKOUT TEMPLATES

You'll receive workout templates for every trimester of pregnancy and phase of postpartum so that you can learn how to write workouts for your clients that are safe, effective, and individualized to fit their ability level, goals, schedule, and equipment availability.

RECOMMENDED READING AND RESOURCES

Throughout your online portal we include recommended reading and resource material for those of you who want to learn even more.

How to Make the Most of Your Materials

Just like working with clients, there's a general framework that will work best for most people, but your exact process might be different than someone else's, and that's OK. There are infinite ways to learn and absorb material, and we encourage you to utilize habits that work well for you. We suggest completing one chapter per week as follows:

1. Read the chapter in the textbook.
2. Visit the online portal and watch accompanying videos, review resources, or download templates.
3. Answer the questions in the accompanying workbook.
4. Answer the case study in the accompanying workbook.
5. Ask any questions you have/start a discussion in the closed Facebook group.
6. Take the unit quiz (if you're at the end of a unit). Otherwise, move to the next chapter.

Depending on your background, one chapter a week might feel overwhelming or it might feel like a breeze. Either way, it's totally fine. We understand everyone has different goals, priorities, and resources so we purposefully set this up as a self-study course. Some people may finish in two months and some may take ten months.

However you choose to complete the course, make sure you are setting yourself up for success. The best way to do this is to consume the information presented in this manual and in the online portal, focus on the overall concepts, deepen your understanding of the principles and practice applying them using the workbook questions and case studies, engage in our closed Facebook group for support, accountability, and discussion, and then, pass the exam.

Once you've mastered the concepts delivered in our Pre- & Postnatal Coaching Certification course, you'll be ready to understand and connect with your pre- and postnatal clients, work with them to set actionable goals that align with their desires, priorities, and resources, write pre- and postnatal exercise programs that will keep them safe and healthy, and support them through their pregnancy and postnatal experience, while helping them get the results they're looking for.