SWEET Success

California Diabetes and Pregnancy Program

Tip of the Month
~ # 4 ~

Are you ADDING STRESS?

Do you ask your patients to change? Offering behavior change is part of our jobs. And yet, change is hard for all of us, and can create a **stress** reaction.

Anyone can have a range of responses to change: shock, confusion, resistance, worry, loss of control, anger, frustration, etc. These **stressful** reactions can come from concerns like "How long will this take?", "How much will I have to change?", How threatening will this feel?", or "Will I actually be successful?"

After adjusting to a change, we will often have more positive reactions: curiosity, a sense of challenge, the excitement of discovery, and a feeling of well-being if we are successful.

Since chances are good the negative reaction will come first, it would behoove us to find a strategy to assist our patients through this period of higher stress. Being kind, supportive and acknowledging when offering change suggestions can be helpful.

Here's another suggestion: identify which reactions you think your patient is having to your change suggestion. Even if it is just: "Is this positive or negative for her?" Then observe yourself: what are **you** feeling? If you are having a negative reaction, then you are also **stressed**. And the longer you have your negative reaction, the longer **you** will feel **stressed**.

Rather than feeling negative, can you be neutral and non-judgmental? The less judgment you have, the less **stress** both you and your patient will have. You will be more successful if you shift your negative ("**stressed**") internal experience to a neutral one. And you are supporting your patient even more fully.

Again, thank you for all you do for your Sweet Success moms.