



Park Prescription Patient Case Studies Training

This document contains six case studies and questions for Park Prescription program development. Each case study presents a patient with specific health needs and poses questions to the reader about the benefits that this patient can reap if given a Park Prescription.

These case studies can be used to train your care team or partners on Park Prescription programs for specific populations. The locations may be modified depending on your target location. A sample agenda could be the following:

Objectives:

- Program partners know why, when, to whom, and how to give a park prescription
- Program partners identify shared strategies to promote Park Prescriptions among patient/population base

10 minutes	Introduction
5 minutes	Break up into small teams
	<i>Note:</i> each team will work on one case study
30 minutes	Small teams work on case study
40 minutes	Each team reports back their answers
20 minutes	Suggestions for Park Prescription program improvement

For examples of how San Francisco Department of Public Health’s professionals answered, view their recorded answers at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sP1OkHJS_Kk



SECTION 2 – PARK PRESCRIPTION

You state: *“Ms. Smith, Maybel is doing well, but I am concerned about her weight and diabetes risk. I’ve recently learned that the more time kids have to play outdoors, the more physically active they are.”*

“Does Maybel ever have the opportunity to play outside?”

Ms. Smith interjects, *“Sure, it would be great for all four of these kids to get outdoors, but things have changed so much. When I grew up around here 50 years ago, I spent the whole day out by the beach with friends and got home when the sun was setting. I remember this area before there was all this construction and roads. That’s just not possible any more.”*

You probe further: *“Why do you think things are different for Maybel? What are some reasons it’s hard for her to get outside?”*

Ms. Smith states that one of her main concerns is Maybel’s asthma, she is afraid of letting Maybel be too active because she is worried Maybel will have an asthma attack. In addition, she is nervous about potentially toxic substances in the soil and air. Ms. Smith concludes: *“Maybel gets plenty of time outside at her daycare.”*

You ask Ms. Smith what the play area is like in the preschool, and she notes that there is minimal outdoor space. You ask Maybel if she has a favorite place in her neighborhood to play and she says: *“I like playing in the yard at home. We have worms in the garden!”*

“Do you ever have the chance to get outdoors together as a family?”

“I wish we did,” Ms. Smith says, but she expresses frustration that she doesn’t have the time to organize any outings as she works during the week and spends weekends grocery shopping or preparing for the next week. She also has to be careful where she goes with Edwin, due to concerns over his inability to assess situations and remain safe, and does not have any one to stay home with him.

You say it seems like Ms. Smith agrees Maybel will benefit from playing outdoors. *“If you are both willing, we can work together to come up with a plan to increase Maybel’s outdoor activity,”* you offer.

- **List three of barriers this family faces in getting out into nature for health.**

- **List three assets this family has in getting outdoors into nature for health.**

- **Make a specific active living goal.**

Case 3

Target population: Foster children, domestic violence, homelessness

Local Park: McLaren Park and Heron's Head

SECTION 1 - BACKGROUND

You are a Primary Care provider at the Southeast Health Center. It is 3:45 pm on a Friday afternoon and you are almost at the end of a full and busy clinic day. You review the next chart, a CHDP visit for 15 year-old African American male named Carson Johnson. Carson moved to San Francisco about a year ago and currently lives near Ingalls Street and Harbor Road. You do not have his previous medical records.

You enter the room and introduce yourself to Carson and his 43 year-old foster mother, Ms. Johnson. Carson has no complaints today, but Ms. Johnson hopes that you can "make him feel better." She explains that the past year has been tough on him, as he left his home in Atlanta because of domestic violence. His previous physician diagnosed Carson with depression and started him on an SSRI. His foster mother states that he is still withdrawn and irritable compared to his usual demeanor, but that medication has been helping.

When you talk to Carson alone for the social history, his eyes are downcast and his responses terse. You find that Carson and his mom had been transitionally housed prior to coming to California. After an extended stay in a shelter, and after living with a series of relatives, they moved into a friend's house. Mother and son were sharing the living room and Carson slept on a couch. When his mother realized they would be losing that living situation, she looked to his aunt, Ms. Johnson, for foster care.

He is currently a sophomore at a high school in the Mission District. Prior to the move from Atlanta, Carson was a successful athlete and was on his high school's cross-country team. He lights up when you talk to him about running and you learn that he is a distance runner. He expresses that he currently feels "stressed" and meets criteria for major depression. He does not feel suicidal and there's no imminent harm.

On exam, he is a physically fit male with a flat affect. He has a normal BMI and blood pressure.

You provide needed care while also plugging him into mental health and social services. You decide he is a candidate for a park prescription.

- **List the issues facing this family, and the resources you would offer them.**

- **List the health benefits this family could get from nature and parks.**

SECTION 2 – PARK PRESCRIPTION

You state, "Carson, it seems like being physically active was a big part of your life. That is great to hear since exercise, especially in a natural setting, may be of help in managing your stress. So I'd like to spend

a few minutes discussing opportunities to get physically active here in San Francisco. How often do you get to run now?"

"I don't. It would be great to run again, but things are too complicated now." He says that things were easier in Atlanta where he had access to many accessible running routes; most were lined with trees and running was his favorite part of the day.

You ask him what made his runs the favorite part of his day. He says he enjoyed his friends as well as the time on his own to think and deal with "everything."

You ask him to tell you more about how things are "complicated." He explains that since moving to California, he has little privacy. He spends the day at school, where he is just starting to make friends. After school he goes to a library so that he can do his homework, and often meets his mother who is studying and pursuing housing options. He adds that he doesn't know where it is safe to go outdoors, and he has lost his running shoes.

When his foster mom is back in the room, you state: "Ms. Johnson, it looks like Carson is interested in getting back outside and running." Acknowledging the difficulty of their new situation, you let them know there are a variety of opportunities for Carson to run or get physically active in the city. "I believe that being physically active was a coping method for Carson in the past."

She says it would be nice for Carson to have his own stable routine including a place to run, but she doesn't know where to start. She didn't spend a lot of time outside when growing up in the Bayview as she lived near an industrial area. Now that she has moved back, she wouldn't even know where to start to recommend time outside for her son. In any case, she feels better keeping him inside and by her side where she knows he will be safe.

- **List three barriers this family faces in getting out into nature for health.**

- **List three assets this family has in getting outdoors into nature for health.**

- **Make a specific active living goal.**

Case 6

Target population: Immigrant, CHDP, Special Needs Teen

LocalPark: Stow Lake

SECTION 1 - BACKGROUND

It is Friday afternoon and you are arriving at the home of Yasamin, a 16 year old Yemeni female who lives with her aunt, uncle and 6 cousins in the Outer Sunset. You are accompanied by an Arabic interpreter as the uncle, who is the only family member who speaks English, is not home today. Yasamin was sent by her parents to live in America in hopes of ensuring that she receives a higher education. You are here for Yasamin's weekly Directly Observed Therapy of Tuberculosis medication, of which she is on month 5 of 6.

When you enter the home, the family is gathered around the television. The atmosphere is loving and jovial and Yasamin is sitting with her 4 female cousins, and two male cousins, one of whom has Down's syndrome. You notice that several of the children are obese, and that the group is eating chips and soda.

You take a moment to meet with Yasamin and the interpreter in a separate room, and find that she has withdrawn from school. While she has not been contagious for over 6 months, she is very worried that she may spread TB. You learn that there is tremendous stigma to having TB in her culture, and that she is becoming increasingly isolated because she assumes that others will not want to be near her.

You decide that Yasamin needs to be connected with mental health services, and that she also may be a candidate for a park prescription.

- **List the issues facing this family, and the resources you would offer them.**

- **List the health benefits this family could get from nature and parks.**

SECTION 2 – PARK PRESCRIPTION

You bring Yasamin's aunt into the room and with help from the translator, you state, *"Ms. Mohammad, Yasamin is doing really well. I'm proud of how well she is taking care of herself. However, it looks like her weight is going up, and like she is not very active or social at this time. I'm also worried that she is not going to school any more."*

You learn that Yasamin is already in therapy for depression, but other than her therapy session once a week, she has few other activities. She is responsible for her cousin with Down's and the family relies on her help. You ask Yasamin what she likes to do for fun, and she says, *"I like to go for walks and to take photographs. I would like to be a photographer."*

You ask: *"Does Yasamin ever have the chance to be outside and to take pictures?"*

The aunt says that she remembers life in Yemen, and how active childhood was. She remembers with fondness her own experiences camping by the beach with her extended family.

You say it seems like Ms. Mohammad agrees that Yasamin will benefit from being outdoors in a group setting. *"If you are both willing, we can work together to come up with a plan to increase Yasamin's outdoor activity."*

- **List three of barriers this family faces in getting out into nature for health.**

- **List three assets this family has in getting outdoors into nature for health.**

- **Make a specific active living goal.**

SECTION 4

Next month, you find that while Yasamin still has not re-enrolled in school, she has been outside the home at least once a day. She and all her cousins accompany her aunt and a family friend who speaks English. They greatly enjoyed the HPHHP program at Stow Lake and hope to go to another HPHHP program in another park next week.

For Small Group Sharing, please discuss and record your responses to these three questions:

- **List 3 ways in which health, parks, and transportation resources can cooperate to better serve this family.**

- **List 3 ways parks can better serve the populations you work with.**

- **List the Community Partners you plan to share Healthy Parks-Healthy People with, in the next three months.**

This tool is adapted from
Nature Promotes Health Training,
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by:

San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department
Healthy Parks Healthy People: Bay Area
San Francisco Department of Public Health
Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy
Institute at the Golden Gate
Golden Gate National Recreation Area
UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland