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## Coaches Guide Journey to Better Health

Writing and Photography by Susan Spencer



L-R Sigita Bielkus, Aida Bielkus, Vyda Bielkus, Ryma Bielkus, Zara Bielkus

When Ryma Bielkus and her four daughters opened B1 Community yoga studio in Orleans last year, their vision was to help people make healthy changes towards optimal health and wholeness. This spring, B1 Community began offering a new way to support that journey with health coaching and health coach training.

"How you live your life affects your health," says B1 founder and health coach, Ryma Bielkus. She explains that health coaches help people make changes they seek in their lives by looking at the client's health in a broad way,

encompassing mind, spirit and body attributes. Bielkus has an extensive background in integrative health care and management and was profoundly influenced years ago by Dr. Bernie Siegel's writings on self-healing and body-mind connection.

According to Bielkus, people benefit from health coaching when something happens to them, like losing a job or undergoing health treatment; when they become aware of a need for change because they feel they're not living authentically; or when they're going through a transition, such as retirement.

Changes might include such simple steps as going to yoga class once a week or improving one's diet. But everybody typically has a story about why they can't make a change and they get stuck. B1 health coaches incorporate the four quadrants of health - nutrition, activity, rest and detoxification - to help a client remove barriers to change. Bielkus says, "The changes people make are small, but they're the right choice to get them moving towards their goal. The coach slows it down for the person so they can see and listen to the wisdom of the body."

It's hard not to follow through on commitment to change when you've got someone holding you responsible for your wellbeing. "Coaches will hold a person accountable," says Bielkus. "It's a partnership."

Health coaches aren't licensed health care practitioners like nurses or psychotherapists, but B1 Community offers health coach training because Bielkus believes the coaching process can add exponentially to the care licensed professionals – or other caregivers – provide. Health coach training starts with basic teleclasses (workshops held by telephone) and builds to modules that put concepts and skills into practice. Coaches are encouraged to model self-awareness and healthy practices by taking two to three yoga, meditation or movement classes per week.

The B1 Feel Better Program, a weekend retreat for individuals or groups interested in developing leadership qualities through self-care, has been approved by the Massachusetts/Rhode Island League for Nursing for eight continuing education hours.

"To learn the direct experience of body-mind-spirit connection, and how that helps people change, is the whole field of human development," Bielkus says. **cha**

B1 Community is located at 6 Nells Way, Orleans. Contact 508-237-8799 or [www.b1community.com](http://www.b1community.com).