Importance of Pelvic Floor Exercise - Teaching Activity

Aim:
To show the importance of pelvic floor exercise by raising awareness of the potential long-term consequences of pregnancy on the pelvic floor.

Learning Outcomes: after this session participants will be able to

- describe where their pelvic floor is and what it does
- explain why the pelvic floor is under more strain during pregnancy
- list some symptoms of pelvic floor dysfunction
- describe and demonstrate at least two different pelvic floor exercises

Activity
Ask one of the non-pregnant participants to stand and hold the bag/tights.
Explain to the group that we are 'making a baby'. Ask what a baby needs to be healthy and happy before it is born. Participants should come up with uterus, baby, amniotic fluid, placenta, extra body fluid, extra fat, extra blood, (increase in breast size). Use some store cupboard grocery items to illustrate the weights (weight list below). Add the items, while stating their weight to the bag/tights one at a time when they have been mentioned.

Alternatives:
Alternatively, if you don't have room for items you could use picture cards (at the end of this document) but they are not as effective.
Another alternative: You could assign a weight to each couple and ask them to bring an item of that weight to the next session. That means you can travel light but also may mean that someone forgets to bring in their item.

Weights:
Uterus 1.5kg - it has increased in size and weight to accommodate baby
Baby 2.5-3kg – average baby weight at birth is 3.5kg (7 ½ lb)
Amniotic Fluid 1l – continually produced by the amniotic sac to cushion and protect baby
Placenta ½ kg – about the size of a dinner plate and 3cm thick
Breasts ½ to 1 kg – as the breasts enlarge and prepare for milk production
Extra body fluid 2l – all parts of the body retain extra water
Extra fat 1kg – in preparation to keep baby well-nourished in utero and and when breast feeding
Extra blood 1l – a mother's blood volume increases about 40%

When all the items (apart from breasts) have been added to the bag, ask your volunteer how the bag feels. Answers may include heavy, tight, full…

Ask the group what is holding a lot of that extra weight in? Answer, Pelvic Floor
Ask if they know what else the pelvic floor is for? Keep urine and poo under control
Ask what kind of impact the additional weight may have on the pelvic floor now and long-term.
Point out that men have pelvic floor, too and should also exercise to prevent problems that may come with age.

Exercises:
Describe and try out some exercises of your choice and point out that there are exercises on the NCT website, there are free Apps available and that their midwife will probably have a hand-out for them, too.

I use the exercises from the NCT website: http://www.nct.org.uk/pregnancy/pelvic-floor-exercises-during-and-after-pregnancy last accessed 17th September 2017.

After finishing the exercises, ask group whether they have already been doing their exercise at home or not. There are usually a few people saying 'no, I am not but I know I should'. Ask the room why people may not do theirs PF exercises. Most groups will come up with 'hard to remember; I keep forgetting, …'
Discuss ways to remember e.g. red traffic lights, when having a cuppa, when going to the bathroom, reminders on phone, …

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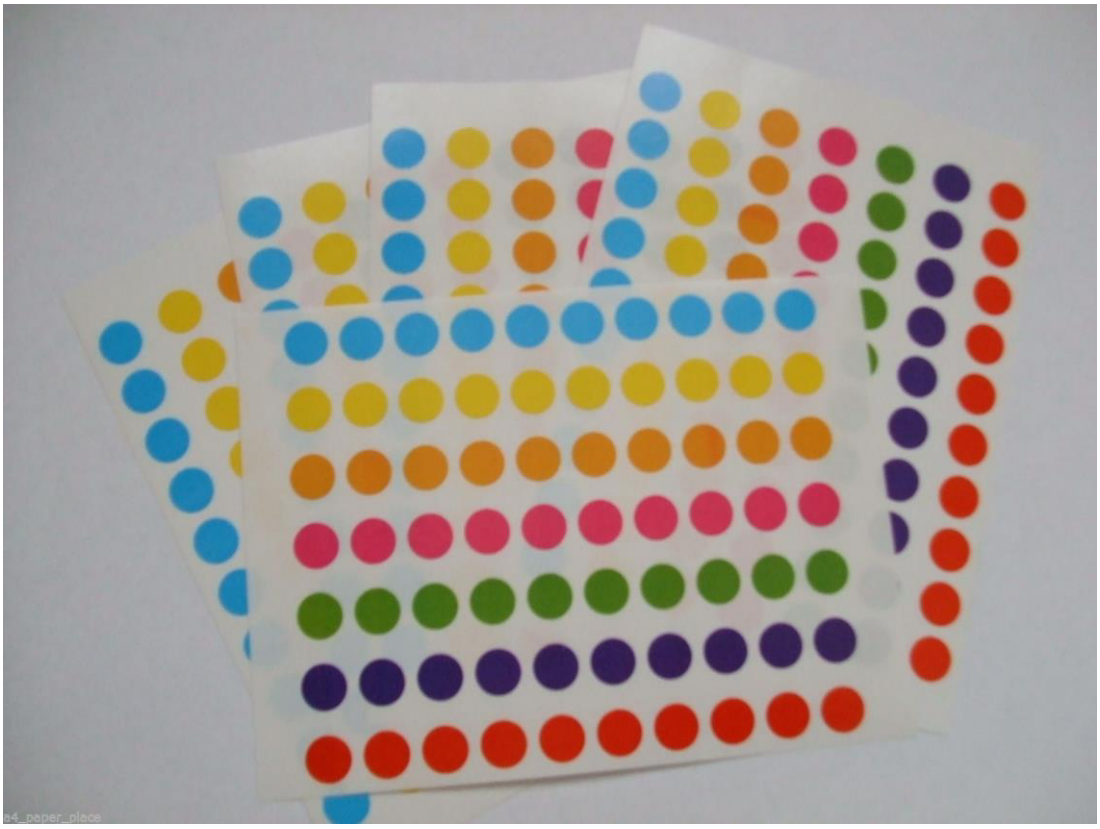
OR

Stickers**!**

Hand out stickers to every participant (or woman) and ask them to.put a sticker at places where you will see them through the day....

- kettle
- car
- computer/laptop
- mobile
- bathroom mirror
- remote control
- alarm clock
- …

Stickers will help to remind you to do the exercises – when you see the sticker do the exercises



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Large print
Teacher's weight list

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References and further reading

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Baby 3kg

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Amniotic Fluid 1l

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Uterus 1.5kg

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Placenta 0.5kg

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Extra Body Fluid 2l

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Extra fat 1kg

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Extra blood 1l

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Breasts 0.5 -1kg

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Baby 3kg

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Amniotic Fluid 1l

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Uterus 1.5kg

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Placenta 0.5kg

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Extra Body Fluid 2l

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Extra fat 1kg

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Extra blood 1l

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Breasts 0.5 -1kg

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Baby 3kg

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Amniotic Fluid 1l

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Uterus 1.5kg

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Extra Body Fluid 2l

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Extra fat 1kg

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Extra blood 1l

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Breasts 0.5 -1kg

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