

THIS IS THE PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE.

A First-hand Look at Residential Weight-loss Programs

My Journey to Health and Wellness

by Suzanne Sanders

Timing is everything. This is so true when it comes to making a decision to change something in your life. I believe one of the most overwhelming decisions a person can face is to finally decide it is time to get their health in order and do whatever it takes.

As a woman in my early 30's, I have dealt with weight issues most of my life. However, the 20-30 extra pounds recently turned into 80-100 extra pounds. Through the course of a couple major life changes, including the death of my father, a transition with work and the loss of a dear friendship, food became my comfort.



Suzanne Sanders works out with a FitRx trainer during her stay at the residential weight-loss program.

I knew I was not in a good place and needed some time to just work on me, as most of my life I have been doing things for others. A friend referred me to a wellness retreat

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(residential weight-loss program) just outside of Nashville, TN. I had always thought I could do what was needed in the comfort of my own home and city. However, to think that I could get away where no one knew me, go somewhere to completely let all of it go and work to find my joy again seemed just the perfect opportunity.

"Me" Time

I had never before taken time for me, to deal just with me. I was excited about the idea of having a schedule that I did not have to set, but just follow along. All of the meals were taken care of and activities, including behavior therapy, were scheduled. A medical doctor oversaw the entire program. I arranged my schedule and committed to the 28-day program.

It took about three days to get settled in this new routine with people I didn't know. The group was comprised of great people from all throughout the country and we bonded quickly. Every hour of each day was scheduled - exercising, learning about food and learning how the food I was eating could really harm or repair my body. We spent a lot of time learning about our behavior patterns and triggers. We all had to dig deep into some very personal spaces to find out why we turn to food to deal with life, both the good and the bad. I enjoyed this part, as I really wanted to get to the root of why I was making certain decisions regarding food choices and the amount I was consuming.

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Not Your Same-old Nutrition and Exercise Routine

Through the course of my stay, I learned how to cook in a new way. Some of the food I was eating on a regular basis was fine, but needed to be prepared differently so the caloric and fat intake was less. I was taught about the foods I had to avoid. I was introduced to new foods that I had never heard of, some that would help to heal the body and repair the damage I had caused. Learning what is out there so I can

make an informed decision in my daily living was one of my favorite parts of the program.

Training everyday made me feel so alive. It cleared my mind and I felt strong. We were trained by an Olympic athlete who took the time to teach us. All of the trainers were patient and supportive. I worked out on my own and with trainers through various seasons of my life; however, this time around I learned new methods and basic training. I was introduced to water aerobics and hot yoga – certainly not your standard "go to the gym and lift weights" routine I was accustomed to. To end each week, we all received a full hour-long massage.

Behavioral Breakthroughs

The behavior therapy was essential for me. There were so many enlightening moments through our times of discussion. I was able to think back and see the patterns in my life that had put me in the position I was in. I became aware of myself and the choices I would normally make. I cannot continue to numb feelings with food or for that matter, even celebrate feelings with food. This is still a work in process but getting better.

Finally, the blood work panel that was collected prior to my arrival showed a couple deficiencies in certain areas that were tied to some of my weight gain. The medical director got me started right away on a protocol that within a couple weeks, we could see notable change.

Coming Full-circle

To go away, and stop all of the movement around you from your normal daily life allows you to gain a perspective that I believe is hard to find when you are living out your day-to-day routine. Attending this wellness retreat was the best decision I could have made to help me get on the road to total wellness. I received the tools necessary to make permanent change in my life.

Included in my graduation package were a total fitness assessment, customized diet plan, medical evaluation and personal health dossier. I am so grateful to the team that circled around me and supported me every step of the way. I have plans to go back once a quarter and stay for a week or two, which will help keep me accountable and on track.

About the Author:

Suzanne Sanders is a 33 year old single woman who owns her own business. She enjoys traveling around the world, playing tennis and sailing.



ABOUT THE OBESITY ACTION COALITION (OAC)

The Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) is a National non-profit organization dedicated to giving a voice to individuals affected by obesity and helping them along their journey toward better health. Our core focuses are to elevate the conversation of weight and its impact on health, improve access to obesity care, provide science-based education on obesity and its treatments, and fight to eliminate weight bias and discrimination.



VIBRANT COMMUNITY



NATIONAL AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS



ANNUAL CONVENTION



ADVOCACY



PUBLIC EDUCATION

LEARN, CONNECT, ENGAGE

The OAC knows that the journey with weight can be challenging but we also know that great things happen when we learn, connect and engage. That is why the OAC Community exists. Our Community is designed to provide quality education, ongoing support programs, an opportunity to connect, and a place to take action on important issues.

Through the OAC Community, you can get access to:

- Weight & Health Education • Community Blogs
 - Community Discussion Forum
 - Ongoing Support • Meaningful Connections
- AND MUCH MORE**



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