



ACE Group Fitness Instructor University Curriculum

Chapter 4: Teaching a Group Fitness Class

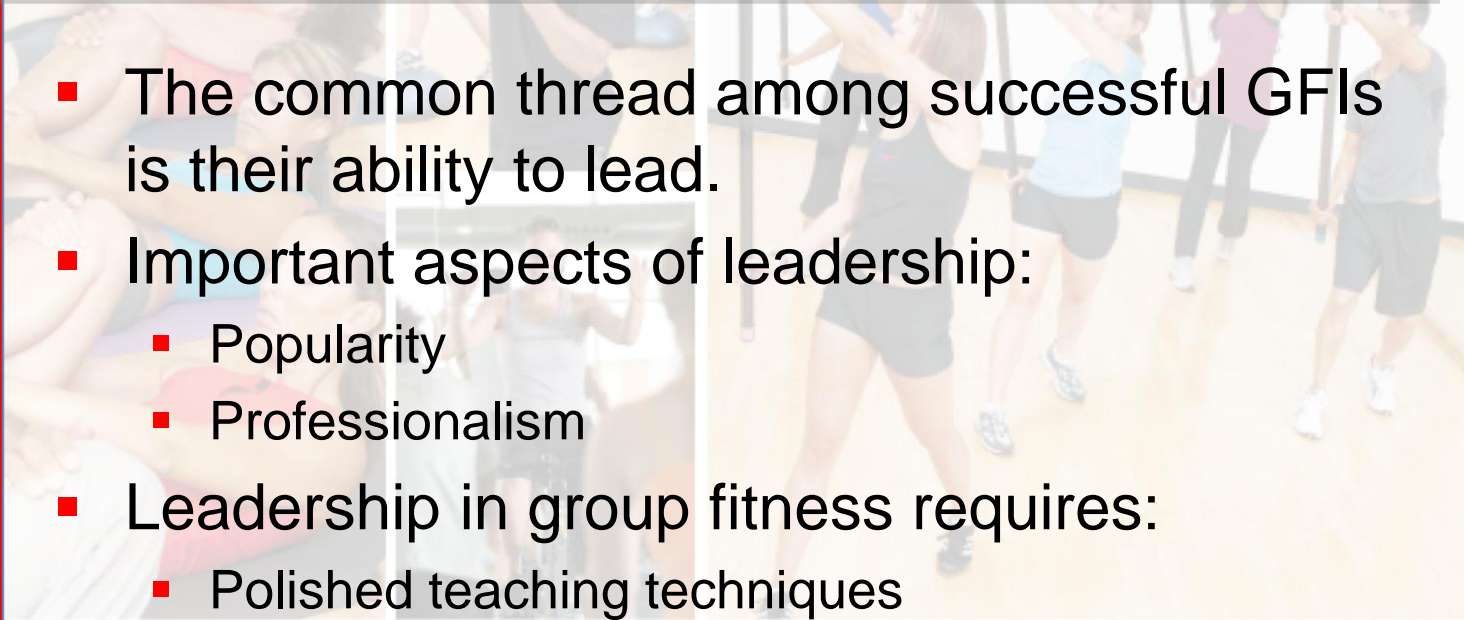


Learning Objectives

- Upon completion of this chapter, you will be able to:
 - List the established domains of learning
 - Explain the stages of learning a new task
 - Take into account facility and equipment considerations
 - Select music and voice volumes that are safe for the GFI and participants alike
 - Effectively select and evaluate exercises
 - Employ effective teaching techniques
 - Integrate music and movement
 - Develop safe and effective group fitness choreography
 - Implement effective cueing techniques
 - Offer appropriate feedback to participants

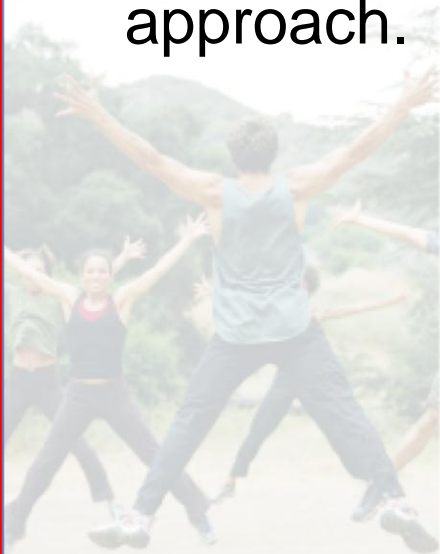
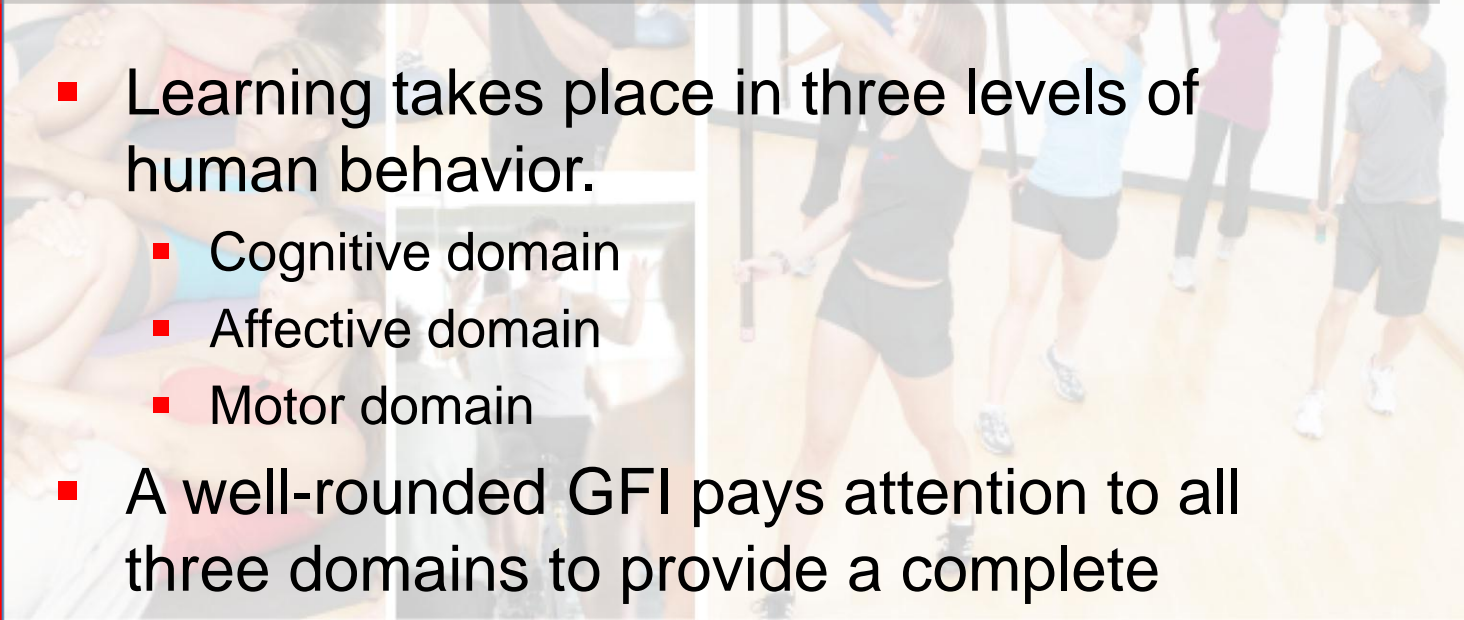
Introduction

- The common thread among successful GFIs is their ability to lead.
- Important aspects of leadership:
 - Popularity
 - Professionalism
- Leadership in group fitness requires:
 - Polished teaching techniques
 - Planning
 - Practicing



Learning Domains

- Learning takes place in three levels of human behavior.
 - Cognitive domain
 - Affective domain
 - Motor domain
- A well-rounded GFI pays attention to all three domains to provide a complete approach.

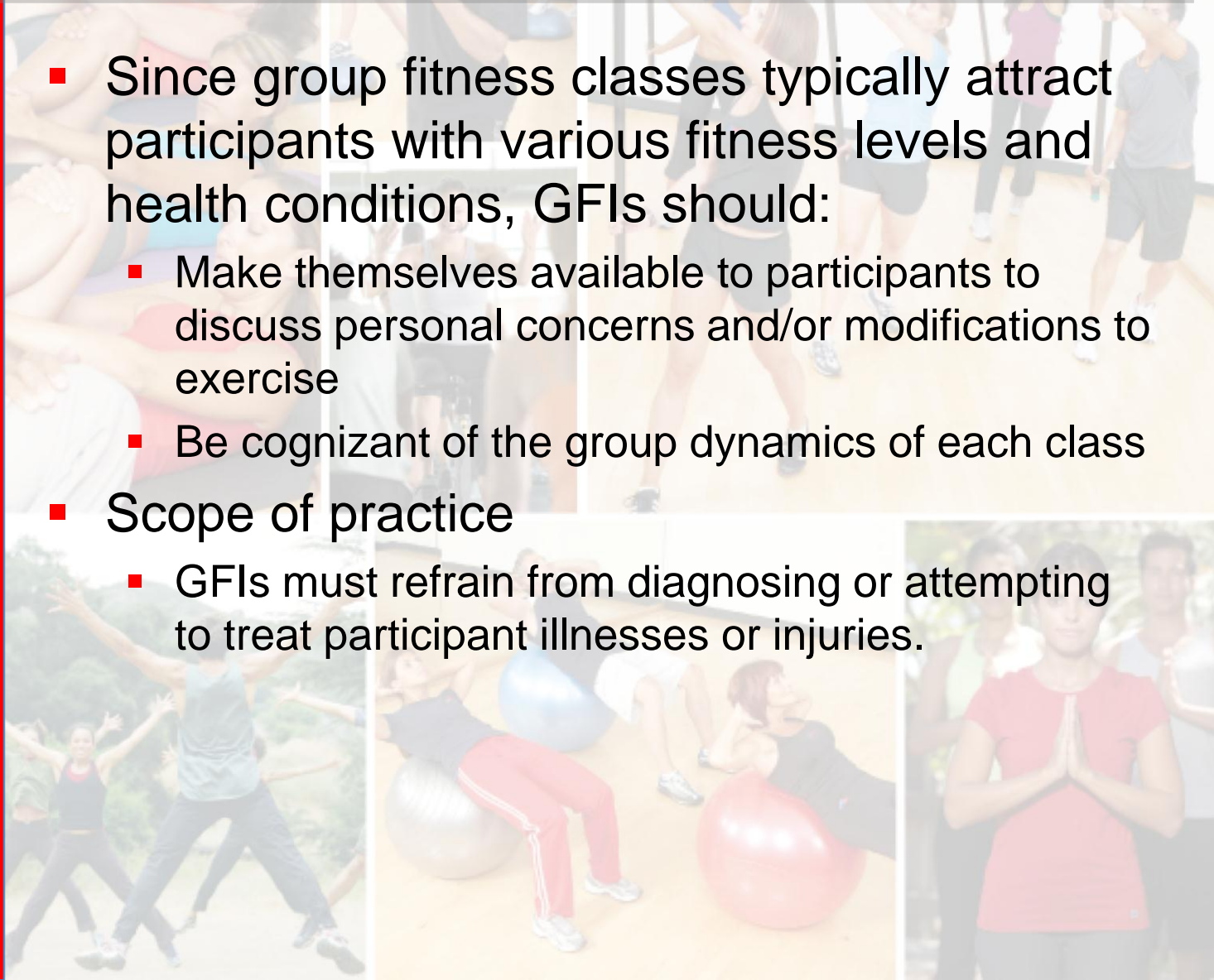


Stages of Learning

- There are three stages for learning new motor skills.
 - Cognitive stage
 - Associative stage
 - Autonomous stage
- GFIs who are aware of these stages can create a positive experience for everyone.
- Effective cueing is important, especially for beginners.
 - Cueing the most important things first—safety, position, and breathing—is helpful in instilling confidence in novice exercisers.

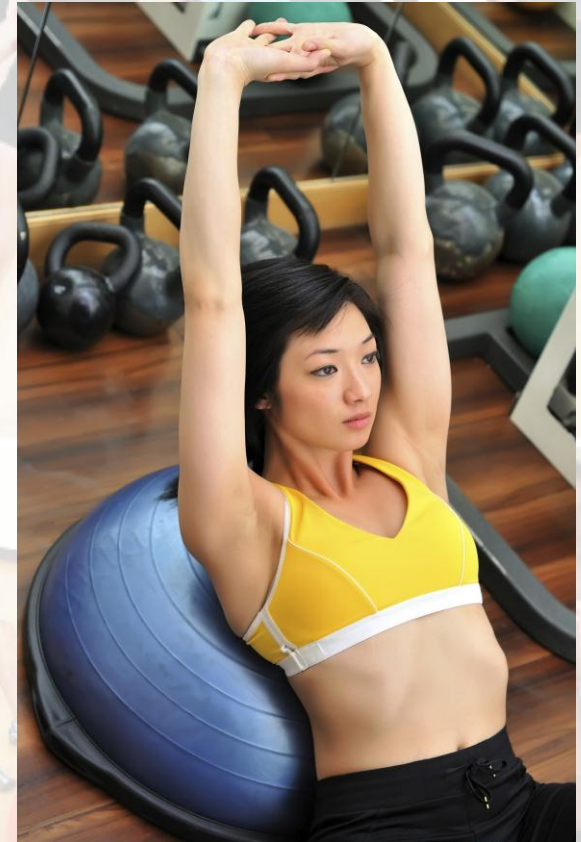
Participant Needs

- Since group fitness classes typically attract participants with various fitness levels and health conditions, GFIs should:
 - Make themselves available to participants to discuss personal concerns and/or modifications to exercise
 - Be cognizant of the group dynamics of each class
- Scope of practice
 - GFIs must refrain from diagnosing or attempting to treat participant illnesses or injuries.



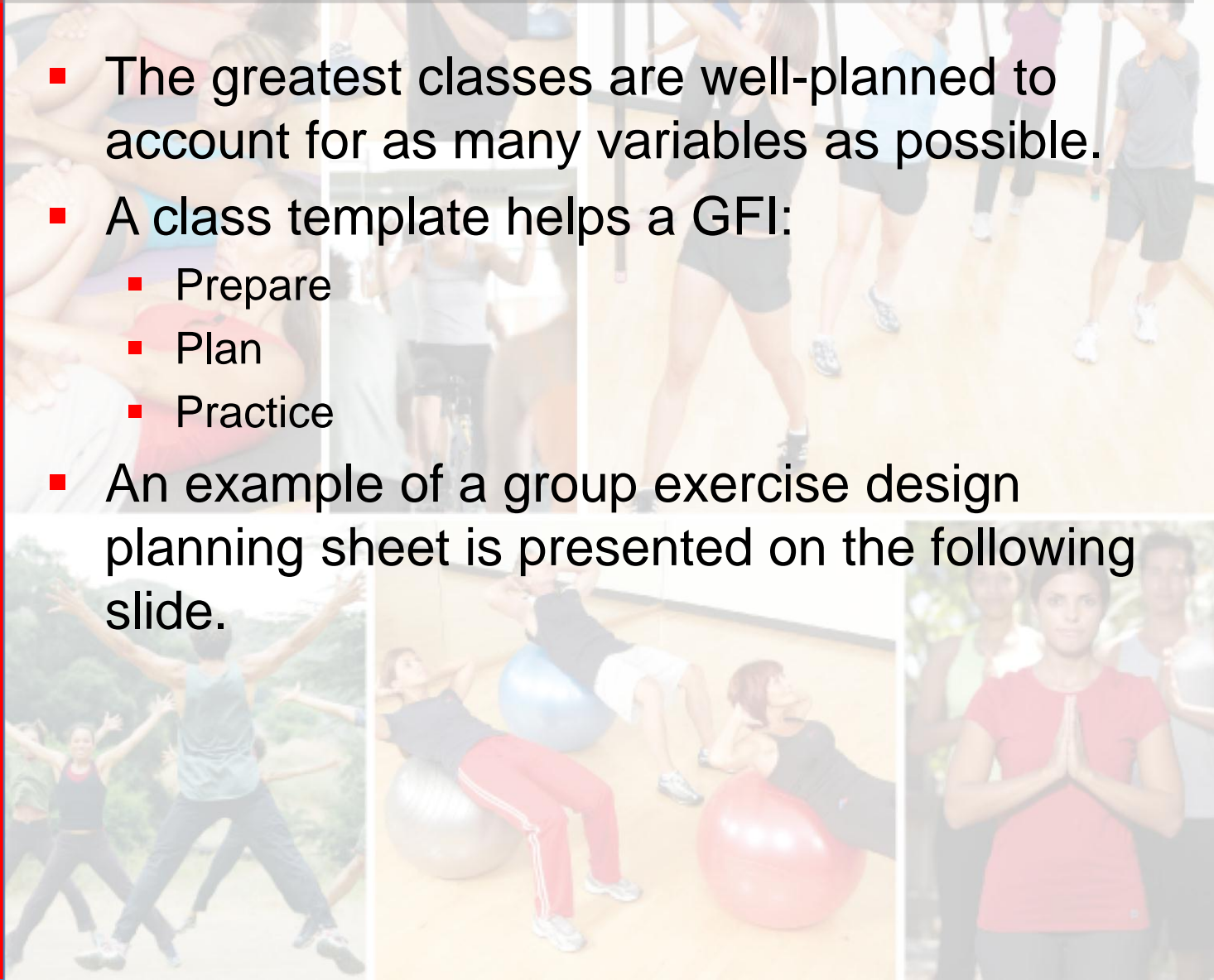
Establishing Class Goals

- A GFI can work “backwards” to create an effective group fitness class.
 - Determine the end-of-class objectives of the participants.
 - Then program the steps necessary to help everyone safely achieve those objectives.
- The effective use of the working-backwards technique facilitates both the learning and performance of motor skills.



Group Exercise Design

- The greatest classes are well-planned to account for as many variables as possible.
- A class template helps a GFI:
 - Prepare
 - Plan
 - Practice
- An example of a group exercise design planning sheet is presented on the following slide.



Group Exercise Design Planning Sheet

Class purpose and objectives: _____

Class duration: _____

Class participants: _____

Class theme: _____

Class equipment: _____

Choreography delivery method: _____

Music: _____

Dress: _____

Pre-class set-up: _____

Warm-up

Duration	Moves (with progressions/regressions)	Functional Purpose

Class Body

Duration	Moves (with progressions/regressions)	Functional Purpose

Cool-down

Duration	Moves (with progressions/regressions)	Functional Purpose

Class Layout

- Refers to the formations used by GFIs to provide maximum opportunities for learning
- A GFI who leads from in front of the room has the least visual access to participants in the back of the room.
 - GFIs should teach to all sections of the class at all times.
- Many GFIs face the mirror to lead the class.
 - Participants can more easily understand movement orientations and directions
 - However, personal connection with participants is diminished
- GFIs who practice “mirroring” can make direct eye contact with participants and enhance rapport.

Facility and Equipment Considerations

- While GFIs cannot always choose the environments in which they work, group fitness areas should feature:
 - Good ventilation
 - Appropriate flooring
 - Sufficient space and access to mirrors
 - A raised platform for instruction
 - Controls for lighting, temperature, and sound
 - Access to drinking water and exercise equipment
 - In aquatic classes, access to water temperature controls
 - Easy access to first-aid equipment and an automated external defibrillator (AED)

Safe Music and Voice Volume

- GFIs should keep their music volume under 85 decibels (dB).
 - Extended exposure to sound levels above 85 dB can impair or damage hearing.
- GFIs who play loud music are at risk of voice injury.
- Audiologists recommend turning up the base and lowering the treble.
 - High frequencies can be more damaging than low frequencies.



Exercise Selection and Evaluation

- An exercise evaluation must be done for each movement included in a group fitness class.
- There are three main factors to consider for any exercise movement.
 - Physiological
 - Biomechanical
 - Psychological
- A GFI's ability to evaluate exercise movements will improve over time.
- A four-step exercise evaluation criteria process is presented on the next slide.

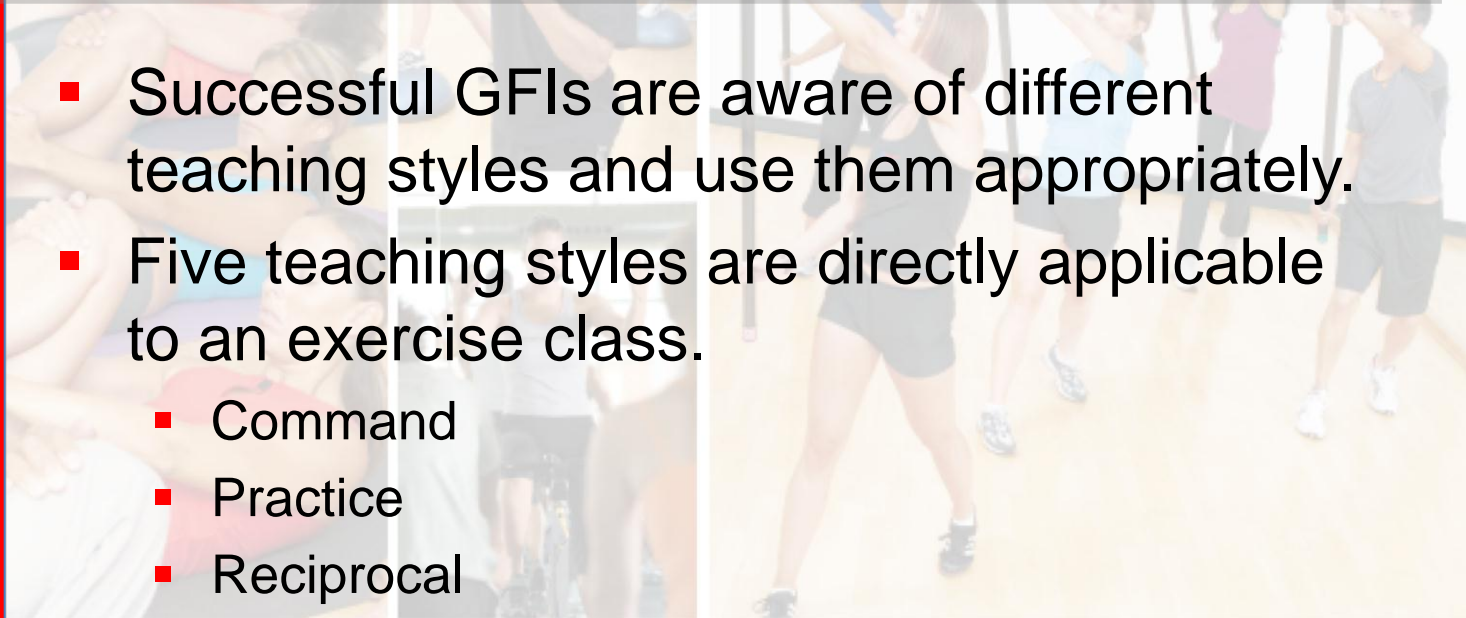
Exercise Evaluation Criteria

Exercise evaluation criteria

1. What is the functional objective?
 - Is my purpose cardiovascular-, strength-, or flexibility-based, or a combination of two or more?
 - Am I trying to teach isolation or integration?
 - How does this skill contribute to, rather than detract from, the participants' ability to perform activities of daily living and overall functionality?
2. Which joint actions (and other movements) achieve that objective safely?
 - When using bodyweight as resistance, is the muscle action opposing gravity?
 - When using equipment, is the appropriate muscle being worked safely?
3. Does the exercise commence from a point of stability and add mobility as appropriate within a safe range of motion?
4. Who are my participants?
 - Am I prepared to offer progressions/regressions for the success of all participants?

Effective Teaching Techniques

- Successful GFIs are aware of different teaching styles and use them appropriately.
- Five teaching styles are directly applicable to an exercise class.
 - Command
 - Practice
 - Reciprocal
 - Self-check
 - Inclusion



Teaching Strategies

- Five teaching strategies can be used by a GFI to enhance learning and enjoyment during class.
 - Slow-to-fast or half-time
 - Repetition reduction
 - Spatial
 - Part-to-whole or add-in method
 - Simple-to-complex or layering



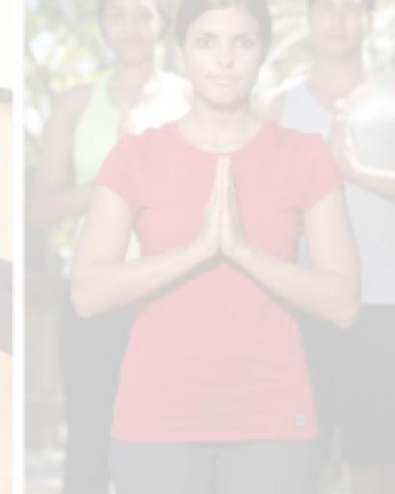
Integrating Music and Movement

- Using music in a group fitness class can:
 - Provide motivation
 - Set the pace for a particular activity
- Main considerations for selecting music in a group fitness class:
 - Whether the music will be in the foreground or background
 - Purpose of the music
 - Participant preferences
- Music tempo can determine the progression as well as the intensity of exercise.
 - A table of music tempos associated with common group fitness modalities is presented on the following slide.

Music Tempo for Common Group Fitness Modalities

Music Tempo for Common Group Fitness Modalities	
Tempo (beats per minute)	Modalities
<100	Most often used for background music or slower, mind-body classes like Pilates, yoga, or stretching classes
100–122	Beginner step-training classes, low end of low-impact aerobics, and hip-hop classes If cycling on the beat and using pedal stroke as a measure of beats per minute, this range represents the upper limit of music tempo
122–129	Muscle toning, advanced step-training classes, low-to-mid impact aerobics, some dance classes, aquatic exercise, and conditioning classes
130–160	Faster-paced movement classes, mid-to-high impact classes, some dance classes, trampoline jumping, and some martial-arts based classes

Note: These guidelines are appropriate for use when GFIs use the music in the foreground and have their participants execute all movements on the downbeat.



Music Mastery

- Demonstrating awareness of music's organization into musical phrases
- GFIs can think of music as being composed of "sentences," each with eight beats.
 - Combine four sentences to create a musical phrase with a total of 32 counts.
- Most group fitness music companies produce music that makes it easy for GFIs to find the start of musical phrases.
- To guide participants, most GFIs use music in the foreground and teach on the downbeat.
- Seasoned GFIs cue several beats in advance of each musical phrase.

Safe and Effective Group Fitness Choreography

- GFIs should try to create classes in which all participants master kinesthetic awareness and physical control.
- GFIs can use the three S's when creating choreography:
 - Simplicity
 - Safety
 - Stability
- Delivering choreography can take two main forms:
 - Freestyle choreography
 - Repeating choreography
- It is recommended to add or change only one choreographic element at a time.

Group Fitness Safety Recommendations

- Keep high-impact moves to a minimum.
- Limit the number of consecutive hops on one leg to fewer than eight.
- Lower the heels to the floor during most movements.
- Follow industry guidelines for music tempo.
- Cycle below 110 bpm in a group cycling class.
- Pay careful attention to the position of the spine.
- Promote muscular balance.
- Use anticipatory cues prior to movements.

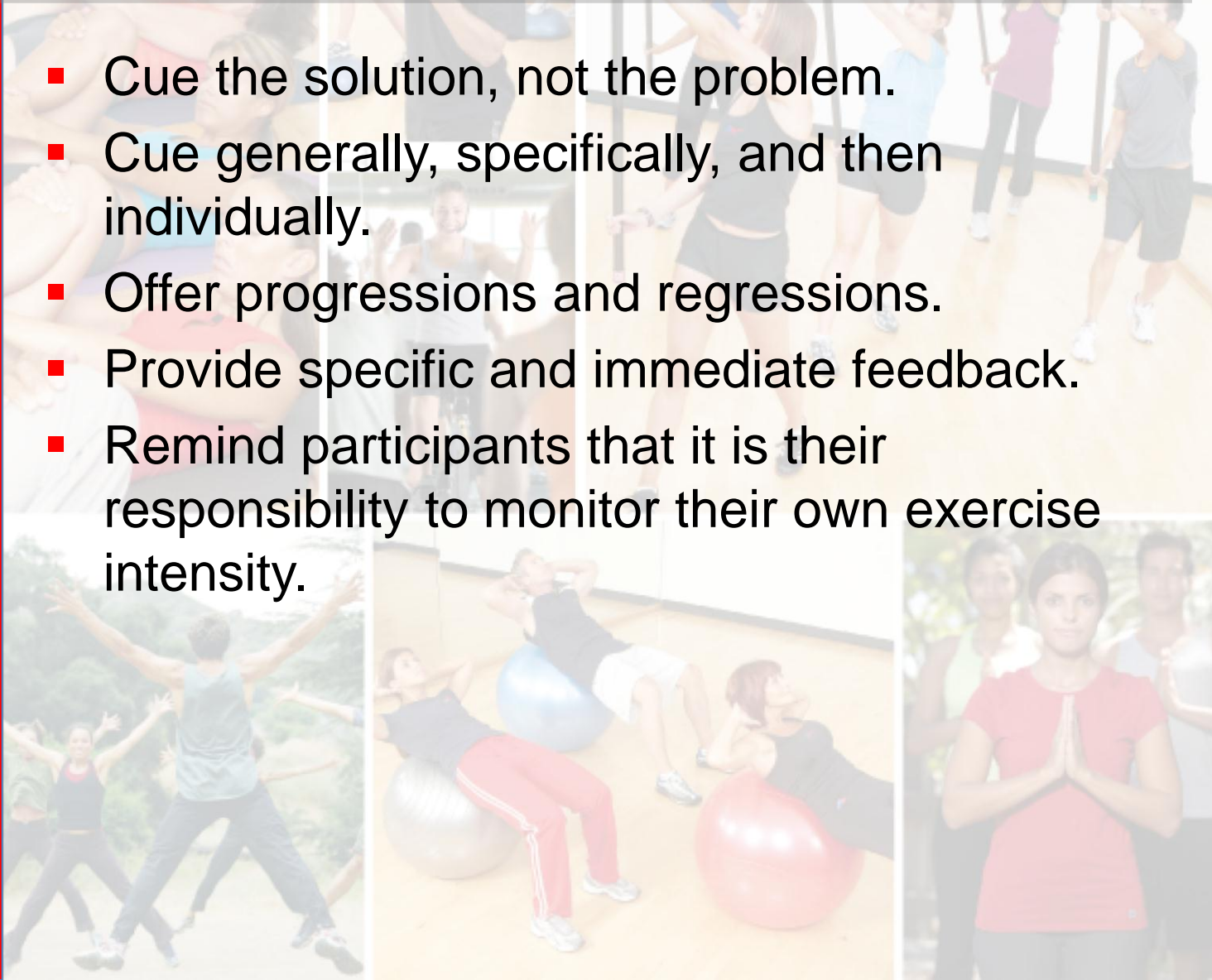
Effective Cueing

- Cues can be delivered based on the three ways people learn.
 - Verbal
 - Visual
 - Kinesthetic
- Types of effective cues:
 - Breathing
 - Alignment
 - Anatomical
 - Numerical
 - Information
 - Reinforcement
 - Directional
 - Spatial



Providing Feedback

- Cue the solution, not the problem.
- Cue generally, specifically, and then individually.
- Offer progressions and regressions.
- Provide specific and immediate feedback.
- Remind participants that it is their responsibility to monitor their own exercise intensity.



Summary

- This chapter covered:
 - The domains of learning
 - The stages of learning
 - Facility and equipment considerations
 - Safe music and voice volumes
 - The selection and evaluation of exercises
 - Effective teaching techniques
 - Integrating music and movement
 - Developing safe and effective group fitness choreography
 - Implementing effective cueing techniques
 - Offering appropriate feedback to participants