

April 2: "Meet and Move" Hike in Scottsdale

Written by Tess Dumlao



Licensed psychologist and eating disorder specialist Dr. Julie T. Anné of Scottsdale understands the reluctance of some folks to venture out to exercise in public.

It's a common theme among participants in her clinic-based emotional eating program, TheHealthyWeighOut in Scottsdale (HWO). She hears questions like this all the time: *"I am overweight and need to exercise, but I am embarrassed by my appearance and don't want to be seen in public. Suggestions?"*

Dr. Anné's clinic, A New Beginning, invites the public to a free community "Meet and Move" hike at 9:30 a.m. on April 2. Participants will meet at HWO Intuitive Exercise Studio and then go to Lost Dog Trail at 124th Street, north of Via Linda, in Scottsdale. The hike is a 2.2 mile walk with an easy grade and is appropriate for beginners.

It's not easy for some to take that first step. "You've committed to a new exercise program. The weather's beautiful and a pair of athletic shoes sits waiting by the door," Dr. Anné says. "You tell yourself, 'I'm ready to get out and move!' Yet, day after day, your motivation to exercise gets overshadowed by an even greater fear of being judged; for your size, for your shape, for your public struggle with weight."

In a society where size 4 is "acceptable" yet a size 14 is typical, Dr. Anné notes that it's a painful irony that fear of being seen exercising in public is a primary barrier to engaging in the physical activity needed to get healthy.

Whether driven by personal insecurities related to body image, or created through past experiences with weight-related judgment or bullying, feelings of embarrassment or "body shame" can be isolating, she said, and can undermine well-intended exercise goals.

Dr. Anné offers these tips on how to gain the support and information needed to overcome vulnerabilities related to body image:

- **Share your struggle honestly with a friend.** Feelings of shame grow stronger when kept secret. While sharing body image insecurities can be vulnerable, it also helps open the door to receiving caring support and can help you realize you are loved just the way you are.
- **Ask a trusted friend for movement support.** Once you let others know how you feel, ask them for support by engaging in movement activities together. This facilitates accountability, helps you feel emotionally safe, and makes movement more fun!
- **Stay away from typical gyms.** Find emotionally safe, non-judgmental places to engage in movement. Take a walk around the neighborhood with a trusted friend or hike in the beautiful Arizona mountains.
- **Make movement fun.** Find activities that get your heart rate up, and make you smile.
- **Stay off the scale!** Body shame is fueled by the scale. Measure your success in seeing your clothes fit better, your body grow stronger and exercise becoming easier.

Free Meet and Move!

This is a gentle outdoor social event for people of real sizes who want to get out and move, but whose fears and insecurities stop them. Led by the warm, non-judgmental TheHealthyWeighOut specialists, this is a great way to meet like-minded, like-bodied others in a supportive, emotionally safe, fun environment! Light refreshments and water will be available prior to the hike. (RSVPs are urged to ensure adequate refreshments for the group.)

When: 9:30 a.m. April 2 with check-in beginning at 9 a.m.

Where: Meet at HWO Intuitive Exercise Studio, 10245 E. Via Linda, #208, Scottsdale, 85258

What: 2.2 mile easy hike on Lost Dog Trail (starts at 9:45 a.m.)

Why: Because it's fun and you'll feel supported.

RSVP: 480.941.4247