





**THE
ESSENTIALS
OF NUTRITION
AND COACHING**

For health, fitness, and sport

UNIT 1

The Precision Nutrition
approach

FOURTH EDITION

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About the Authors



Krista Scott-Dixon is the intellectual powerhouse behind Precision Nutrition's coaching curriculum. With a PhD from York University in Toronto and 10 years of university teaching, Krista has over 20 years of experience in research, adult education, curriculum design, and coaching and counseling.

She's the author of several books, dozens of popular articles, and many academic publications. She's lectured internationally and is a popular podcast guest and conference presenter, known for her ability to break down complex or academic concepts into clear, accessible language.

Starting with her website *Stumptuous.com* in the mid-1990s, she's spent over 20 years pursuing self-education in health and fitness. Through writing, coaching, speaking, teaching, and curriculum development, Krista has galvanized thousands of clients to transform their health and fitness for the better, and is guiding a new generation of fitness professionals to a higher level of success and satisfaction.



Dr. John Berardi is a co-founder of Precision Nutrition, the world's largest online nutrition coaching and certification company.

Dr. Berardi has been recognized as one of the top exercise nutrition experts in the world. He earned a PhD in Exercise Physiology and Nutrient Biochemistry at the University of Western Ontario, Canada. His work has been published in numerous textbooks, peer-reviewed academic journals, and countless popular exercise and nutrition books and magazines.

As an elite nutrition coach and exercise physiologist, Dr. Berardi has worked with over 50,000 clients in over 100 countries, including Olympic gold medalists, world champion UFC fighters, and professional sports teams. He is also an advisor to Apple, Equinox, Nike, and Titleist.

Dr. Berardi was recently selected as one of the 20 smartest coaches in the world and one of the 100 most influential people in fitness.



Brian St. Pierre is a renowned expert in performance nutrition. He is a Registered Dietitian with a Masters in Food Science and Human Nutrition from the University of Maine. He is also a certified strength and conditioning specialist, a certified sports nutritionist, and the author of five books including the *High Performance Handbook Nutrition Guide*.

As Precision Nutrition's Director of Performance Nutrition, Brian contributes to groundbreaking research, education and curriculum development at PN, where he is also an esteemed coach.

Brian shares his expertise on a global scale by presenting at conferences around the world, serving as a nutrition consultant for pro sports teams such as the San Antonio Spurs, Brooklyn Nets, and Cleveland Browns, coaching professional and Olympic athletes, and writing for Precision Nutrition and popular publications including *Men's Health*, where he also serves on the Advisory Board.



Dr. Helen Kollias is a researcher and L1 Certification advisor at PN. She is also a regular content contributor to the blog, where she uses her witty and articulate writing style to make complex science accessible and entertaining.

Helen holds a PhD in Molecular Biology from York University, specializing in the area of muscle development and regeneration, and a Master's degree in Exercise Physiology and Biochemistry from the University of Waterloo. She has also held research positions at some of the most prestigious institutions in the world, including John Hopkins University and Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children.

Outside the lab, Helen has played and coached varsity soccer, and has been involved in fitness and weight training for almost two decades. She also has two daughters with whom she wants to share her joy of inquiry and experimentation, but above all, she wants to teach them resilience, bravery, and grit.



Camille DePutter is an author, speaker, and communications consultant with a rich portfolio of experience in marketing, public relations, and storytelling.

Camille received her HBA in English from the University of Toronto and trained at the Humber School for Writers. An advisor to Precision Nutrition, Camille lends her communication expertise to Precision Nutrition publications, course materials and marketing content.

As a consultant, Camille has helped dozens of top brands and business leaders refine their messaging and improve their customer relationships. Her work has been published extensively in popular websites, magazines and newspapers. She is also the author of the workbook *Share Your Story*, and self-publishes at camilledeputter.com.

UNIT 1

The Precision Nutrition approach

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Objectives

Congratulations

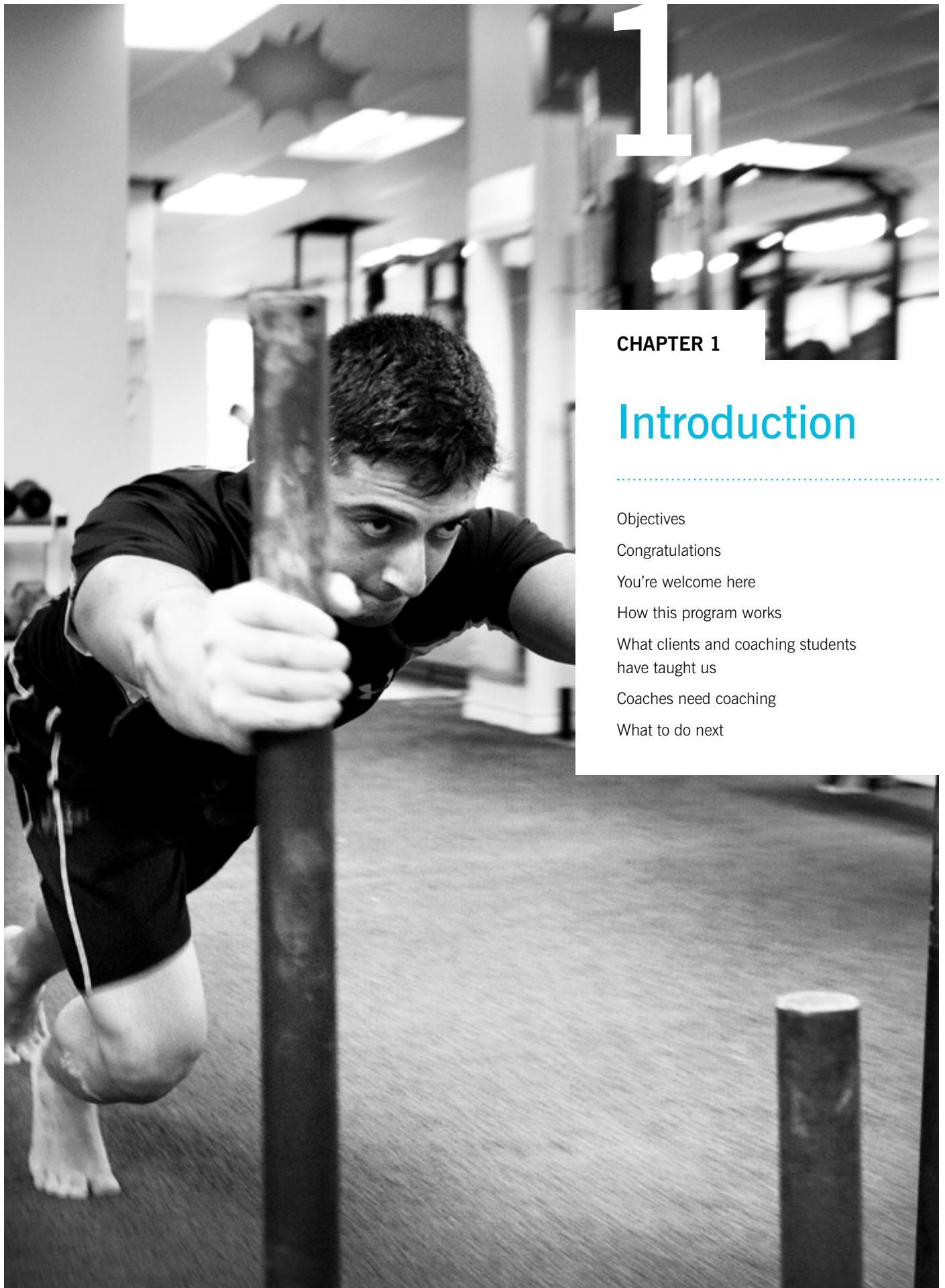
You're welcome here

How this program works

What clients and coaching students
have taught us

Coaches need coaching

What to do next



1

Objectives

In this chapter:

- we introduce the PN Coaching program and explain how it works; and
- you'll learn about a few of our key coaching principles.

Congratulations.

By enrolling in this Level 1 Certification program, you've just taken an important step for your education, your coaching career, and potentially your life.

Our mission at Precision Nutrition is:

Provide research-based, life-changing, personal nutrition and lifestyle coaching for everyone.

We take that mission seriously.

Everything we do is designed to help people change their mindsets, behaviors, and lives.

We've seen nutrition, movement, recovery, self-care and simply *living well* transform people's bodies, outlook, relationships, and experiences.

This isn't a random "feel-good" project.

We take a structured, systematic, science-based approach.

We use a **curriculum** of "deep health" based on:

- a hopeful, empowering vision of people's potential for change;
- the most current scientific knowledge about health, fitness, nutrition, and behavior; and
- a strategic set of progressive, practical actions to help people realize that potential.

We've tested this worldwide, with over 100,000 clients in our online PN Coaching and ProCoach programs, and have asked over 60,000 Certification students and graduates to test it out with the people they serve. We've asked three academic journals to study and peer-review our method.

Thanks to the data from this group, and the scrutiny of our scientific reviewers, we can say with confidence:

It works.

Now, you can make this approach work for you.

You're welcome here.

Our students come from all over the world, and all types of backgrounds.

For instance:

- Maybe you're already a personal trainer, strength coach, or group exercise instructor who wants to make nutrition coaching part of your professional services.
- Maybe you're a naturopath, chiropractor, physician, dentist, nurse, or other health care professional who wants to communicate better with patients.
- Maybe you already know about health, nutrition, and lifestyle coaching, but you feel like you could learn more, or apply things better. (Maybe you secretly worry you're not "good enough", or that you don't "know enough", to *really* help people.)
- Maybe you're wondering about opportunities for technology-based coaching. (We'll talk more about business models later.)
- Maybe there was that one client or patient you couldn't help, and that troubles you.

CURRICULUM

A step-by-step progression for learning and practicing skills or material

You feel like there has to be an answer — a way to do better or help people more effectively... *if only you could find it.*

Or, perhaps you work in another field, but you're considering a career change:

- Maybe you're seeking a job that feels more meaningful, or you want to feel more confident at the job you have.
- Maybe you're wondering about the freedom of online coaching, and fantasizing about working on your laptop from a beach chair.
- Maybe you want a job where you can wear stretchy clothes and running shoes. (It's the best!)

Perhaps you just think reading about nutrition and lifestyle coaching is fun and interesting. (We agree.)

Whoever you are, whatever you do, and whatever your reasons... you're welcome here.

With this Certification, you'll really help people improve their health, nutrition, and lifestyle behaviors.

Lasting change comes only from *consistently choosing different actions*.

In this program, you'll learn our structured, systematic, science-based approach. Rather than guessing or assuming, we'll show you how to *know* you're on the right track.

You'll feel qualified to give advice your clients can trust. All of the information we offer here is research-based and road-tested with every type of client.

You'll help people set realistic goals, and then reach those goals.

You'll be able to help all kinds of people, in all kinds of situations.

You'll learn to do work that feels meaningful and valuable. When you can help people change lifestyle habits, you change their lives. When you can do that with the PN values of respect, collaboration, wisdom, intellectual curiosity, and respectful discourse — while serving others with high standards of ethics and professionalism — well, that feels pretty terrific.

You'll be supported along the way.

- We suggest you start with our PN Certification Facebook group (you can find the link to join on your PN Certification homepage). This is the best place to meet other PN students and grads, network, and get guidance on progressing through the Level 1 Certification program.
- If you get stuck, your Level 1 coaches are an email away: coach.11@precisionnutrition.com

How this program works

The curriculum

Just as with our PN Coaching, ProCoach, and Level 2 Certification programs, this Certification has a curriculum — a step-by-step progression for learning and practicing the material.

In the next chapter, we give you some specific tools and techniques to help you learn and work through the material.

Here's how the program is laid out.

Unit 1: The Precision Nutrition approach

You'll learn about the philosophy and methodology of how we coach, as well as how to:

- help yourself learn
- explore your own coaching style
- use evidence in coaching
- coach “deep health”
- build a coaching relationship
- and coach effectively

Unit 2: The science of nutrition

You'll learn the science of:

- energy balance and metabolism
- digestion and absorption
- macro- and micronutrients
- water and fluid balance
- stress and recovery

Unit 3: Putting it into practice

You'll learn how to apply what you've learned, including how to:

- work through the PN coaching process, step by step
- assess clients
- create action plans
- monitor and use data
- work with different “nutritional levels” and client capacities as well as specific scenarios and populations
- build a coaching business, including coaching online

Your learning process and our approach

Follow what inspires you.

You might wonder:

Am I even up for this? Can I handle it? What if I don't have enough experience?

You've got this.

We'll make sure of it.

We're educators — and coaches. We're used to working with people who have a wide range of abilities and experiences. We designed our curriculum to account for this.

The single biggest factor for success isn't how much you know about nutrition.

It's not about whether you were a good student in school.

And it's not about how much time you've spent in the health and fitness industry. Heck, it doesn't matter if you've never even worked in the health and fitness industry.

Instead, the key to success with our program comes down to one question:

Are you passionate about helping people lead healthier lives?

If you can answer “yes”, then this is for you.

Go at your own pace.

There's no schedule (although, as you'll see in the next chapter, we suggest you make one for yourself, to help yourself stay on track).

Some materials are in print; others are online on your personal Certification homepage.

Each chapter of the program has:

- a book chapter
- one or more videos
- workbook questions to help you better understand the material and practice answering questions
- supplemental reading, if you'd like to learn more
- an exam at the end of the chapter

You can complete those any order you like. (For example, you can watch a video, read the corresponding book chapter, and try out the workbook questions.)

To complete each chapter, you must submit the corresponding exam.

Exams include multiple choice and true or false questions. You can find all chapter exams in the online materials found on your PN Certification homepage at my.precisionnutrition.com.

Look for signposts and learning tools.

As you read, look for things like:

- **Chapter objectives** at the beginning, which will give you goals before you even start reading.
- **Chapter summaries:** At the end of each chapter, we summarize the most important points from that chapter. These will confirm that you've learned what really matters, and give you another handy tool for review.
- **Key terms**, which are highlighted and defined in the margin. You'll also find an index of key terms at the end of each unit.
- **Case studies:** Most chapters include examples of nutrition in practice with real clients.
- **References:** This Certification is research-based. You can go and look up the source research yourself, if you want.
- **Recommended reading and resources:** Excited to learn more? We hope you are. Throughout the text and online, we suggest optional material to read and explore, if you're interested.

What over 100,000 clients and 60,000 students have taught us

When we started Precision Nutrition nearly 15 years ago, we thought nutrition coaching meant "being 'experts' who give people information", and that "success" would come from clients doing what we said. Clients who didn't follow the plans weren't "motivated enough".

After tens of thousands of clients, and about the same number of coaching mistakes and missteps, we came to realize that nutrition coaching isn't that at all.

Sometimes clients would get "results", but weren't happy anyway. Or, sometimes we'd think some science was really cool, but we never used it in practice.

Just like our clients, we've grown a lot with targeted practice and experimentation.

We've learned what really works for helping people change.

Now, we're passing that on to you.

“No, I would not recommend Precision Nutrition.”

When we saw this response on a customer satisfaction survey, we were shocked.

You'd think this might have come from a client who didn't get any results by following our PN habits.

In fact, this client lost over 50 lb (23 kg) in a year. She got results, all right.

But she didn't get the feeling that she was seeking — connection, being “heard”, and being genuinely supported by her coach.

“I haven't lost any weight, but I'm so happy now.”

We've also seen some version of this client response too.

Sometimes, clients don't see the changes they originally wanted.

However, by following the PN practices or working on their “inner game” (i.e., their mindset, emotions, and self-talk), they dramatically changed how they

felt — about themselves, their power to make choices, and their lives.

To many people, this “inner change” is a greater gift than any number on a scale or measuring tape.

These clients have taught us that coaching isn't about a product or service.

It's not about a workout or diet plan.

Instead, coaching is about creating connection and a set of emotional experiences.

Each client might want to feel different things (such as confidence, mastery, or fun).

But ultimately, coaching is about helping people feel the way they want to feel.

We won't make the same mistakes again.

(Hopefully.) And now, knowing this in advance, neither will you.

Coaches need coaching.

You learn as you practice.

Coaching isn't a one-way street. It's not “the expert” handing down wisdom to the client.

Rather, it's a dynamic relationship. The more you learn about you, and the more you practice the foundational skills, the better your coaching gets.

Applying what you'll learn here to *yourself* is the best way to become an effective coach. As we teach you the principles, ideas, and methods that apply to clients, we encourage you to apply those same things in your own life.

Throughout this program, you'll see some important coaching ideas come up over and over.

Some of these ideas may surprise you.

These are principles we convey to all our coaching clients. Again, consider how you might apply them to yourself as well.

Here's a sneak peek.

OUTCOME-BASED DECISION MAKING

*Deciding what to do next
based on data and results*

Show up, and do something.

Coaching isn't about giving information, it's about inspiring and helping people to take action. Coaching depends on *practice* — purposeful behaviors that build towards *real, sustainable change*.

Opportunities for practice are constantly available. Practice as much as possible.

Even a little action, done consistently, moves us forward.

You're the boss.

People want to feel in charge of their own process, and each person will need and want slightly different things.

It's important to take responsibility for ourselves, whether that's your client with their behavior changes, or you with this Certification.

Act on your own behalf to do what matters to you, and help your clients do the same.

Use outcome-based decision making.

We often ask clients, "how's that working for you?"

Test your approach against reality. Gather data, evaluate what happened, and proceed based on how things are *actually* working.

Refine the plan and next actions based on the data you get.

Deep health matters.

At Precision Nutrition, we look for what we call "deep health" — a multi-faceted, whole-person, whole-life experience of thriving in all domains: physical, mental, emotional, and so on. (We'll look at deep health in more detail later.)

We don't want clients to have big muscles but small lives, or clients who "look good" but feel awful inside.

We want to help people feel and function well in all aspects of their lives.

It's about the food... but not only about the food.

What you eat is important. What's also important: *Why* you eat, *how* you eat, *where* you eat (and *with whom*), and *who you are* or *how you feel* as you eat (or don't).

We're powerfully influenced by what's in our head and around us.

Basics are best.

We love learning. As coaches, some of us have lost many hours searching scientific studies.

But that complexity or high-level technical information, *won't necessarily help you to be a better coach*. Nor will it help your clients do the things they need to do.

After all, how many people do you know that:

- eat mindfully and calmly... at every meal?
- choose foods wisely and thoughtfully... at every meal?
- move their bodies... every day?
- rest and recover... every day?
- get fresh air and natural light... every day?
- balance meaningful work and joyful play... every day?

Imagine if you could get all of your clients (or yourself) to do those things, consistently.

Excellence — and results — come from consistently mastering the fundamentals. Keep it simple.

What's the best option? It depends.

There's no such thing as one plan that fits everyone, for everything, all the time. Even the most broadly applicable guidelines, such as “green leafy vegetables are good” or “sleep seven to nine hours a night” don't suit every human being.

When you make your recommendations, consider as many factors as possible. Tailor those recommendations to a real person with a real life.

Most people are beginners.

Whether they're “regular folks” or the best athletes in the world, we've discovered that everyone needs to practice the fundamentals and get support doing it.

People can make incredible changes, enjoy vibrant good health, and/or perform at elite levels using simple techniques... *if they practice those consistently.*

Look for the awesome.

Most of us have tried to better ourselves by “finding flaws”, dwelling on our “failures”, or criticizing our “mistakes”.

How did that work?

Unless we can be objective enough to treat it as a simple engineering problem, not well.

Instead, try the opposite: Look for what is going well, where we've succeeded, and where we feel excited and inspired to learn, grow, and explore being just a little bit better.

We all have strengths, resources, and advantages already. Find those, and help your clients use them.

Try it now.

For this chapter and the next, we ask you to practice a “Chapter Review Checklist”.

Having a checklist is a great way to prepare — whether that's for a client, or for a quiz — as well as to review core ideas and tasks.

On your Certification homepage, you'll see a “Chapter Review Checklist”. Look at the items on it, and tick them off one by one as you complete them.

Once you complete the checklist, you're ready to take the Chapter 1 exam.

What to do next

1. **Review this chapter, along with the online and workbook materials.** Complete the Chapter 1 Review Checklist found in your online Certification materials.
2. **Make sure you're clear on how the program works and how you progress through it.**
3. **Look for your own strengths.** Think about what you bring to the table — whether that's education, training, life experience, your own struggles, your personality, or simply a passion to serve and help others. You probably have more than you think!