

Session 20 Leader Guide:

Balance Your Thoughts

Objectives

In this session, the participants will:

- Reflect on the long-term process of engaging in weight management behaviors and the impact that losing weight has on their life.
- Rank the importance of personal reasons for persisting at weight management efforts.
- Identify common types of self-defeating thoughts that interfere with lifestyle goal achievement.
- Practice countering characteristic negative thoughts with more helpful and effective responses.
- Practice countering excuses and rationalizations in order to strengthen a new habit of healthy restraint and self-control.
- Consider how to respond to “slips” as a normal, ongoing part of the weight management experience.
- Practice giving themselves credit for the positive behaviors they have been able to maintain.

To Do Before the Session:

- If providing Food and Activity books, have a supply available for participants.
- Prepare Session 20 handout for participant notebooks.
- Review Food and Activity records; add comments.
- If collecting **Resistance Training Logs** and/or **Sit Less Trackers**; add comments.
- Print copies of the handout, **When You Reach Your Weight Goal** to review with participants, as they achieve their weight goals.
- Print copies of the **Group Lifestyle Balance Monthly Calendar**; have a supply available for participants.
- If providing **Resistance Training Logs**; have a supply available for participants.
- If providing **Sit Less Trackers**; have a supply available for participants.
- Given the array of self-monitoring tools provided, determine your protocol for review and feedback to the participants. Note: As session frequency decreases, the number of records returned at each session may increase.
- Optional: Print and cut the **Thoughts** cards for an interactive group activity.

Available in the DPP-GLB Providers Portal:

<https://www.diabetesprevention.pitt.edu/my/login.aspx>

- **GLB Resistance Training Log**
- **When You Reach Your Weight Goal Handout**
- **Group Lifestyle Balance Monthly Calendar**
- **Sit Less Tracker**
- **Thoughts cards**
- **Guidelines for Reviewing Food and Activity Records**

*[Note: For those participants who have reached their goal weight, review with them the handout entitled **When You Reach Your Weight Goal**. This may be done before or after the group meeting.]*

Group Sharing Time (allow at least 5 minutes)

Let's take a few minutes to see how things went since our last meeting.

Were you able to apply what you learned at the last lesson to something in your life? If yes, how?

[Problem solve with the participants to address any barriers.]

[Praise all efforts to self-monitor and to change eating and activity behaviors. Be positive and nonjudgmental. Encourage group discussion.]

Balance Your Thoughts (page 1)

Let's start our meeting today by taking a few minutes to reflect on what you have learned about yourself so far in GLB.

Please take a few minutes and answer the questions on page 1. *[Ask participants to share their responses, if comfortable doing so. Encourage group discussion.]*

My Reasons for Behavior Change (page 2)

Think about the process of being involved in a weight management experience and/or the impact weight loss has had on your life.

Rank the top five personal reasons you want to continue to focus on losing weight (or maintain their weight loss) and improving health.

[Discuss (while recording group members comments on the board or a flip chart) the different reasons that can be identified for persisting at lifestyle weight management efforts over the long haul, even when it is hard.]

Notice that the reasons listed can be divided into four main categories: the first 6 relate to appearance; the next 6 to health; the next 5 to self-confidence; and the last 6 relate to social reasons. You may have other reasons. Please add them to the list.

Do Your Thinking Patterns Help or Hurt Your Lifestyle Progress? (pages 3-4)

In Session 9 we talked about how thoughts can help or hurt the lifestyle change process. What did you learn to do about self-defeating thoughts? *[Answer - Be aware of the negative thought, STOP, and change it to a more positive thought.]*

Effectively managing the thinking patterns that are part and parcel of one's lifestyle weight management experience is critical to long term success. There are several common categories of self-defeating thoughts that characterize the "mental game" of weight management and it is helpful for you to identify and label such thoughts. The goal is to become more skillful at countering negative self-defeating thoughts with positive self-statements.

[Review page 3. Encourage group discussion as participants answer the questions.]

Please turn to page 4 and let's talk about some of the common self-defeating thoughts.

[Review with the group each of the common categories of negative, self-defeating thoughts listed in their participant handout. Provide examples, and ask the group members to consider which of these types of "discouraging thought traps" they have found themselves falling into in the past. Encourage the group to help one another by coming up with alternative responses or counter-challenges that would be more helpful for long term weight loss efforts in the future.]

*[Optional activity: Distribute one **Thoughts** card to each participant. You may choose to just use the most meaningful cards for the group. Read each question below and encourage group discussion. If the group is responsive to this activity, distribute additional cards and keep going.]*

- This is an example of which of the nine categories of self-defeating thoughts listed on page 4?
- Has anyone every had this thought? Is this a common thought for you or rare? In what situation(s) does it occur?
- How did it impact your behavior?
- Did it keep you from reaching your goals?
- How would you change this to a more positive thought?

Excuses and Rationalizations (pages 5-6)

One type of self-defeating thinking pattern deserves further attention and discussion.

Making excuses and rationalizations for a slip from healthy eating or activity is a common type of thought pattern in which weight losers engage, particularly when they are experiencing weight regain. Because changing old habits can be difficult, there is a “kernel of truth” (or more) to such thoughts (e.g., it is hard to say no to a tempting treat when others around you are indulging, or you are saying to yourself that you will get back on track “tomorrow”). Nonetheless, the bottom line is that these types of self-defeating thoughts give the individual permission to stray from their healthy lifestyle behaviors and long-term goals.

Please look at the list of typical statements of why “It’s okay to stray”. *[Review and discuss. Ask participants to highlight their own excuses and identify healthier responses.]*

It is important that you be vigilant for these types of thoughts as you continue your efforts at weight management.

The more often an individual “gives in” to such thoughts the more he or she strengthens the habit of “giving in or giving up”. The more often an individual practices “not giving in”, the more likely it is he or she will strengthen the behavior of self-restraint and healthy self-control. Countering excuses and rationalizations requires repeated practice just like other elements of behavioral self-management during the weight loss process.

[Review and discuss the information on page 6. Encourage group discussion. Emphasize the “bottom line” messages in the two text boxes at the bottom on the page.]

Do You Give Yourself Credit? (page 7)

Ultimately, the most effective weight loser/maintainers are those who can maintain a positive long-term outlook regarding their behavior change efforts and build on “small wins”.

It may be difficult for you to focus on what you are doing well, day after day, particularly in the face of slips. To prevent discouragement practice giving yourselves credit for everything you are managing to do well.

You talked about the many eating and activity behaviors that are going well and the positive things you have noticed.

Starting today, please record 1-2 healthy behaviors you do right each day. Feel free to jot them down in your Food and Activity record. The goal is for you to reinforce your self-confidence by building on each instance of personal success.

In GLB, we focus on progress; not perfection.

To Do (page 8)

Turn to page 8 and let's focus on what you can do between now and the next session.

[Review and discuss. Encourage participants to take what they learned in today's group meeting and apply it. See if it helps them in their lifestyle change efforts.]

[Announce the day, time, and place for the next session.]

After the session:

- Weigh participants who did not do so prior to the group meeting.
- Complete data forms and documentation required in your setting.
- Follow your program's protocol for managing absences.
- Follow your program's protocol for reviewing and commenting on the various self-monitoring records.
- Review the self-monitoring records. Write brief comments. Be positive and nonjudgmental.
 - Praise all efforts to self-monitor and to change eating and activity behaviors.
 - Highlight any positive changes made that relate to the topic of the last session before the records were collected.
 - Refer to **Guidelines for Reviewing Food and Activity Records** available in the GLB Providers Portal.
- If collecting **Resistance Training Logs** and/or **Sit Less Trackers**, review them. Write brief comments. Be positive and encouraging.