

Session 9 Leader Guide:

Manage Slips and Self-Defeating Thoughts

Objectives

In this session, the participants will:

- Review their progress since Session 5.
- Identify some things that cause them to slip from healthy eating or being active.
- Discuss what to do after a slip to “get back on your feet again.”
- Practice identifying high risk situations and strategies for managing a slip.
- Make a plan to get back on their feet after slips from healthy eating or being active.
- Recognize that everyone has self-defeating thoughts. Identify examples.
- Learn how to stop self-defeating thoughts and talk back to them.
- Practice stopping negative thoughts and talking back to them.
- Discuss their experience with the pedometer.
- Compare their steps with the recommended GLB step goal.
- Learn how to gradually and safely increase steps using the pedometer.

To Do Before the Session:

- If providing Food and Activity books; one per participant.
- Review Food and Activity records from last session; add comments.
- Prepare Session 9 handout for participant notebook.
- Make a list of resources for behavioral and mental health referrals. Some participants may raise problems outside the expertise of the Lifestyle Coach, such as a significant clinical depression, anxiety, or a clinical eating disorder. Lifestyle Coaches should be prepared to make referrals to address such problems.
- Optional: Have a large Stop sign to use as a prop in class.

Available in the GLB Providers Portal:

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

- **Guidelines for Reviewing Food and Activity Records**

Group Sharing Time (allow at least 5 minutes)

In the last session, you learned how to step up your activity plan by using a pedometer and how to have an active head. You also learned about the FITT principle and how to use the RPE scale to measure your exercise intensity.

- Did you wear your pedometer? How did it go? Did it help you to move more in your daily life? Did it help you reach your activity goal? What are some things you did this past week to add steps?
- Did you complete the Active Head challenge? Please share your experience.
- Were you able to use the RPE scale to estimate how hard you were working during exercise? Please share your experience.

Let's take a few minutes to talk about your experiences this past week. *[Choose only a few of the following prompts to guide discussion.]*

- Overall, how did it go last week? What went well? What problems did you have? What could you do differently?
- How close did you come to your calorie and fat gram goal?
- What change did you make in your eating pattern this past week that you are most proud of?
- Were you able to follow your plan to reach your goal for minutes of planned activity during the week? How did it go? What did you learn?

[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.]

Progress Review (pages 1-2)

In GLB we will sometimes pause and give you a chance to think about the changes you have made so far in your eating and activity behaviors. This allows you to celebrate the positive lifestyle changes you have made. It also allows you to think about your focus for the upcoming month.

First, let's take some time to review your progress since Session 5, which is the last time we formally looked at how you were doing. *[Distribute Session 9 handout.]*

First, **what changes have you made to be more active?** We've talked about increasing both structured/planned activity, the kind you've been recording, and spontaneous/unstructured activity, like taking the stairs instead of an elevator, that add more total movement to your day.

[Give the participants some time to briefly record on page 1 some of the changes they've made. Ask volunteers to share, if they feel comfortable doing so. Praise and encourage the maintenance of these changes.]

Now let's talk about the **changes you have made in your eating pattern**. Think about changes you have made to eat fewer calories and to make healthier food choices.

[Again, have participants briefly record some of the changes they've made. Ask volunteers to share, if they feel comfortable doing so. Praise and encourage the maintenance of these changes.]

Lifestyle change is a process. The purpose is to look at progress toward reaching your goals. No one is looking for perfection.

Let's look at how the scale has responded.

Look at your **Weekly Record**. Have you reached the GLB 7% weight loss goal? Check yes or no.

Are you on track with your personal weight loss goal? Check yes or no.

- Some people have the goal of losing 7% while others would like to continue losing until they reach a personal weight loss goal.
- Let's talk about what is a healthy weight for you. *[Review the information on page 2, **What is a Healthy Weight for You**. Explain how to read the BMI chart on page 13. Emphasize that this is not a perfect tool. Stress the importance of talking with their health care provider about what weight is right for them, given age and overall health. However, any "shift to the left" on the chart is a sign of progress toward improving health.]*
- No one weighs the same every day so we ask that you determine a 5 pound weight range you would like to stay within. This applies to those of you who want to reach and maintain the 7% goal and those who would like to continue losing more weight.

Now let's look at your physical activity. *[Participants should refer to the **How am I Doing?** graph.]*

- Have you reached the goal of 150 minutes of physical activity per week?
- Some people have the own personal activity goal. Are you on track with this goal? *[Ask for volunteers to share, if they feel comfortable doing so.]*

Emphasize that it's important for the participants to focus on their accomplishments so far, no matter how small, and express your confidence in the participants' future success.

Encourage attendance at group meetings, even if they are struggling. It is not uncommon for participants to want to avoid the meetings if they feel they are not doing well. However, this is usually when they most need the group support, suggestions, and encouragement.

Pages 14-22 provide information about how to “build a better” breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snack. These pages will be helpful as you continue to shift to healthier food choices and a healthy eating pattern.

Finally, let's look at the box at the bottom of the page. Think about how you will continue to make progress toward reaching and maintaining your weight, eating, and activity goals. Write down something that you are willing to focus on right now. *[Ask for volunteers to share, if they feel comfortable doing so.]*

The Slippery Slope of Lifestyle Change (page 3)

Today we're going to talk about “slips,” or times when you don't follow your plans for healthy eating or being active. *[Review page 3 and include the following:]*

Let's use skiing as an example. Everyone who learns to ski knows that they will “slip” and fall down. It's a natural part of learning to ski. What a skiing instructor does is to help beginning skiers anticipate when they might fall down and show them how to get up again. That's what we'll do today--talk about when you might “slip” from your eating and activity plans, and how you can get back on track again after you slip.

Note: Throughout this session, try to use analogies in addition to skiing that are meaningful to the participants. (For example, one analogy is how we handle fires. First, we try to identify high-risk situations in which fires are likely to occur. Second, we try to take steps to avoid these situations if we can. Third, in case a fire does occur, we plan ahead for a way to put out the fire and/or escape. We make a plan that is as simple and easy to remember as possible so that we are more likely to follow it while under stress.) You will also want to use a meaningful analogy for how the participants have developed other skills by making mistakes and learning from them, such as learning to drive a car, bake a cake, and so on.

Now let's move on to the topic for today, "**slips.**" *[Review page 3 and include the following:]*

Slips are:

- **A normal part of lifestyle change.** Just like falling down is a normal part of skiing. If you are going to ski, you are going to fall. All skiers will fall. And

- everyone who sets out to lose weight and be more active will have slips.
- **To be expected.** If you haven't already had some slips, you most certainly will have them in the future. Slips are **inevitable**.

Does this sound discouraging? Well, it doesn't have to be. Because **slips don't hurt your progress. What hurts your progress is the way you react to slips.** So today we'll talk about the best way to react to slips when they happen.

Different people have different things that lead to a slip. For example, many people may respond to **moods or feelings** with slips from healthy eating or being active.

Some tend to overeat when **happy**. Imagine that:

Your **family is celebrating**. Maybe it's a holiday, a birthday, or a vacation. There is plenty of everyone's favorite foods, from appetizers to desserts. And for years, your family's custom has been to "take it easy," have fun and just relax during these times. **What would this situation be like for you? Would you tend to slip in this kind of situation?**

Some people are more vulnerable to overeating when **bored**. Imagine that:

You're **at home alone, watching a favorite TV program**. You're feeling okay, pretty relaxed, but a little bored. A commercial comes on at the end of the program, and you find yourself wandering into the kitchen. **What would this be like for you?**

Other people overeat when **upset**. Imagine that:

You are settling down for a relaxing evening at home. Someone in your family starts to talk about something that's been part of an **ongoing argument** between the two of you. You both get angry and he or she stomps out of the house, slamming the door. You head for the kitchen. **What would this situation be like for you?**

Or here's another example:

You're **behind on a project at work**. The boss has been looking in on you every 10 minutes and glaring at you impatiently. You feel pressured and very tense. You go get yourself a cup of coffee and see a delicious snack that someone brought in that morning. **What would this be like for you?**

Which is the *most* difficult for you in terms of slipping from healthy eating: feeling happy, bored, or upset? Are there other things that cause you to slip from healthy eating?

[Give the participants time to name a few examples. Have them record the examples on page 3, and then ask volunteers to share.]

What things cause you to slip from being active?

[Ask the participants to name several examples, such as vacations, holidays, feelings or moods, cold or hot weather, and to record on page 3. Ask volunteers to share.]

The situations that lead to slips differ from person to person. For example, you may tend to eat when you're bored, whereas someone else may get involved in a hobby. Or when you are at a party, you may be so busy talking and laughing that you forget to eat, whereas someone else may find the goodies are just too tempting. **What causes you to slip is learned. It is a habit.**

The way you react to slips is also a habit. You can learn a new way to react to slips that will get you back on your feet again.

What to Do After a Slip (page 4)

The good news is that slips usually do not ruin your chances of success or undo the progress that has been made. It simply means that more practice and learning are necessary.

[Review page 4 and include the following:]

First, **remember two things:**

- **Slips are normal and to be expected.**
A slip doesn't need to lead to giving up completely. Slips can and should be useful learning experiences.
- **No one time of overeating or not being active, no matter how extreme, will ruin everything.** You won't gain more than a few pounds of weight even after the biggest eating binge imaginable--unless you *stay* off track and keep overeating time and time again.

So, after you have a slip:

1. Talk back to negative thoughts with positive thoughts.

The negative thoughts that come after a slip can be your worst enemy. They can lead to feeling discouraged, guilty and angry and undermine your ability to handle the slip effectively. Talk back to the negative thoughts with positive ones.

2. Next, ask yourself what happened.

Use the opportunity to look closely at the situation and ask yourself what happened. Was it a special occasion? If so, is it likely to happen again soon? Did you overeat in response to feeling lonely, bored, or depressed? Did you eat because of social pressure? Did you skip activity because you were too busy with other things, or because of work and family pressures? Use these questions to review the situation and think about it objectively.

Learn from the slip. Then you can plan a strategy for handling the situation better next time.

Can you avoid this situation in the future (for example, by not sitting near the food or by not walking past the candy machine)? If you can't avoid it, **can you manage it in a better way** (for example, by making sure you have low-calorie foods available at home)?

3. Regain control the very next time you can.

Do **not** tell yourself, "Well, I blew it for the day," and wait until the next day to start following your healthy eating plan. **Make your very next meal a healthy one. Get back on schedule with your activity plan right away.** You will not have set yourself back very much if you follow this suggestion.

4. Talk to someone supportive. ("Talk it through, don't eat it through.")

5. Finally, focus on all of the positive changes you have made and realize that you can get back on track. The same person who "blew it" today is the same person who has been successful during many previous weeks. Slips do not reveal "real you" (hopeless, lacking willpower, etc.). They are simply another occasion of behavior. **Remember, you are making life-long changes. Slips are just one part of the process.**

Practice: Help Sadie Manage the Slippery Slope of Lifestyle Change (page 5)

[Ask six participants to each read a section out loud from Sadie's story. Initiate a group discussion.]

Can anyone relate to Sadie's story? How?

Now let's look at Sadie's story more closely.

[Ask the participant to reread card 1 and discuss the following:]

- This is a high-risk situation. Why? *[Answer: This is a change in her usual routine. She has a self-defeating towards taking a weekend off.]*

[Ask the participant to reread card 2 and discuss the following:]

- What happened? *[Answer: She has a self-defeating thought and she does not have a plan.]*
- Remember that GLB is a new healthier lifestyle, not a 'diet' that she is "on" or "off".
- Why is it important to plan ahead?
- What could Sadie have done differently?

[Ask the participant to reread card 3 and discuss the following:]

- What happened? *[Answer: She had a slip and gained weight.]*
- How did Sadie respond to the slip? *[Answer: She responded in a good way. She got back to working on her plan as soon as she got home and was able to lose the weight she gained.]*

[Ask the participant to reread card 4 and discuss the following:]

- What happened? *[Answer: She had self-defeating thoughts.]*
- What could she have done differently? *[Answer: Talk back with positive thoughts, use it as a learning experience and focus on the positive, all the weight she has lost.]*

[Ask the participant to reread card 5 and discuss the following:]

- What happened? *[Answer: She had another slip, is now experiencing a slide and avoiding group meetings.]*
- What could Sadie have done differently? *[Answer: She could talk to someone supportive, come back to group meetings right away to help refocus and to use the group support.]*

[Ask the participant to reread card 6 and discuss the following:]

- What is happening? *[Answer: She continues with a slip.]*
- What did she do to get back on her feet? *[Answer: She came back to group.]*

The Slippery Slope tends to happen in a chain of events. It is possible to break the chain in many places, but the earlier the chain is broken the better. This is the goal of problem-solving.

Slips from Healthy Eating/Slips from Being Physically Active (page 6)

You see from Sadie's example that it is possible to manage the slippery slope. Now, it's time to apply what you learned to your own lifestyle efforts.

[If time allows, guide participants through the questions about slips. Ask participants to share their response, if comfortable doing so. If you don't have class time to complete this activity, suggest to the group that they should complete this page at home.]

Self-Defeating Thoughts (page 7)

Sadie had some self-defeating thoughts. Now we're going to talk in more detail about self-defeating thoughts.

Everyone has self-defeating thoughts at times. These thoughts **can lead you to overeat or be inactive.** Then afterwards you may **feel even worse** about yourself. A **vicious cycle of self-defeat** can result.

Let's look at the example on page 7. *[Review the example and include the following:]*

- This self-defeating thought might lead you to eat some potato chips.
- This is followed by another self-defeating thought. Next, you're discouraged and go on to eat more of them.

Sometimes we aren't aware we are having self-defeating thoughts. Self-defeating thoughts can become such a habit for most of us that we tend to believe and act on our self-defeating thoughts without even hearing them.

One goal of this session is to help you hear your self-defeating thoughts and teach you to talk back to them.

Let's look at some **common examples** of self-defeating thoughts.

[Review each category and the example(s), then ask a question or two to get the participants thinking about their own experience with self-defeating thoughts. Include the following information:]

1. Good or Bad Thoughts

- Sometimes this is called "all or nothing" or "light bulb" thinking (either on or off) with nothing in between.
- Do you have some foods you consider "good," and some foods you consider "bad?"
- What happens when you eat a little of what you consider to be a "bad" food?
- Can you think of some problems with considering a food "bad?"

2. Excuses (or Rationalizations) Thoughts

- These thoughts blame something or someone else for your problems. You act as if they have so much power that you have no choice but to overeat or be inactive.
- Can you think of a time when you bought some high calorie food "for someone else"? Did they really need the food, or do you think you used them as an excuse to buy the food for yourself?

3. Should Thoughts

- These "should" thoughts assume that someone is standing over you, forcing you to do what you don't want to do.
- What kind of things do you think you "should" or "should not" do to lose weight and be more active?
- What do you expect yourself to do perfectly (for example, self-monitoring)?
- What happens when you expect perfection of yourself? How do you feel? How does it affect your future decisions and choices?

4. Not As Good As Thoughts

- These are thoughts when you compare yourself to someone else and then blame yourself for not measuring up.
- Do you compare yourself to someone else? Who?

- How does comparing yourself to that person make you feel? How does it affect your decisions and choices about eating and being active?

5. Give Up Thoughts

- These thoughts often follow a chain of other kinds of self-defeating thoughts.
- Do you ever want something good to eat and think, "I'm sick of GLB and this healthy lifestyle stuff"?

[Note: These are the thoughts that GLB most wants to help participants manage.]

How to Talk Back to a Self-Defeating Thought (page 8)

[Review the three steps on the top of page 8 and include the following information:]

Once you are aware of a self-defeating thought, you can "talk back to it." Here's how:

1. First, catch yourself having the self-defeating thought. Ask yourself, "Is this thought moving me forward or bringing me down?" As soon as you're aware of a self-defeating thought, say to yourself, "I'm doing it to myself."
2. Then imagine shouting "STOP!" to yourself. Picture a huge, red stop sign. *[You may want to hold up the STOP! sign prop at this point.]* The stop sign is so big that it takes up all the room in your mind. This should startle you and get rid of the self-defeating thought.
3. Talk back with a positive thought. No matter how well you've stopped a self-defeating thought, it will probably return again. It may be a habit for you. So, it's important to begin to build a new habit: positive thinking.

Let's look at some examples of how to "talk back" to a self-defeating thought.

This session may be an appropriate time to review with participants the work sheet "Remember Your Purpose" (Session 1, page 4) on which they recorded their personal reasons for joining the program and so on. Details from this work sheet may provide images and words for the participants to use in talking back to negative thoughts with positive ones.

Any imagery that is significant to the participants may help make the process of "talking back" more meaningful and fun; for example, some participants might find it enjoyable to imagine a devil on one shoulder and an angel on the other, and to see the task of positive thinking as, "letting the angel talk."

[Review the categories and the examples in the box on page 8 and include the following information:]

- **Good or Bad: Talk back with "Work Toward Balance".** Don't expect perfection of yourself, but don't indulge yourself either. Work toward an overall balance.

- **Excuses: Talk back with “It’s Worth a Try”.** Instead of looking for something or someone else to blame, why not give yourself a chance? Try something. You just might succeed.
- **Should: Talk back with “It’s My Choice”.** You are in charge of your eating and activity. No one else is responsible for your choices or standing over you with unrealistic expectations.
- **Not As Good As: Talk back with “Everyone is Different”.**
- **Give Up: Talk back with “One Step at a Time”.** Problem-solving is a process. It takes time to make life-long changes. Learn from what doesn’t work and try another option. Learning is always a success.

Practice: Help Sam Talk Back (page 9)

Now let's practice by helping Sam to stop self-defeating thoughts and talk back with positive thoughts.

Note: This activity may be done with the entire group or you by dividing the participants into several small groups. If time is short, encourage participants to work on this page at home.

Review the directions.

First, say the negative thought aloud. Then say “Stop!” Use a stop sign prop if you find it helpful.

Generate examples of positive thoughts. Ask participants to record the positive thoughts on page 9.

[Emphasize the “bottom line” message at the bottom of the page.]

Checking In On the Pedometer (page 10)

Last week you received your pedometer. You were asked to wear it every day last week and then calculate your average steps per day.

What were your average steps per day? Write it in the box on page 10.

Now you can look at your daily step count average in light of national averages and the GLB step goal.

[Review the information on page 10 and include the following information.]

To give you some perspective, the average adult tends to get about 5,000 steps per day or 35,000 steps for the week.

In GLB, your goal is to **slowly increase your steps to an average of about 7,000 steps per day or 50,000 steps for the week** and to maintain this level. This goal was also used in the DPP.

Don't forget to keep recording your activity minutes per week. Reaching your goal for activity minutes each week will help you reach your goal for steps. The two work hand in hand.

As a best guesstimate, someone who is doing 150 + minutes of moderate intensity physical activity per week and is not completely inactive in their normal day will achieve about 50,000 steps for the week.

To Do (page 11)

Turn to page 11 and let's focus on what you can do between now and the next session.

Please continue to keep track of your weight, eating, and activity minutes. Come as close as you can to your calorie, fat gram, and activity goals. *[Remind participants that the GLB activity goal is to reach and maintain at least 150 minutes per week.]*

New things to practice:

To help you practice what you learned today, let's apply what you learned about slips and self-defeating thoughts to your lifestyle change efforts.

First, between now and the next session, catch yourself thinking self-defeating thoughts and record them. Practice stopping them and talking back with positive thoughts. Notice any change in how you thought, felt, or acted. You can share your experience/feedback next week.

In addition, try to apply what you learned about slips. If you have a slip this week, use the worksheet on page 6 to make an action plan. Or think of something that has caused a slip in the past. Follow your plan. You can share your experience/feedback next week. *[If time allows, participants can start working on the worksheet on page 6.]*

[Review the step goal that is adding steps slowly and safely.]

[Note: This is the standard GLB step progression. Many participants will be able to comply. However, you should make exceptions for individuals with serious health

problems that limit their mobility. For them, they should start where they are and gradually increase as much as they can.]

Session 9: Resources (pages 12-22)

Page 12 lists the additional resources.

Page 13 is the BMI chart discussed earlier in this session.

Pages 14-22 provide information about how to build a better” breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snack. These pages will be helpful as you continue to shift to healthier food choices and a healthy eating pattern.

[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.
- Review the self-monitoring records from the previous week. Write brief comments. Be positive and nonjudgmental.
 - Praise all efforts to self-monitor and to change eating and activity behaviors.
 - Highlight especially any positive changes made that relate to the session topic of the week before the records were collected: recording RPE, wearing the pedometer and recording steps per day and weekly average, coming close to their calorie, fat gram, and activity goals.
 - Refer to **Guidelines for Reviewing Food and Activity Records** available in the GLB Providers Portal.