

Coaching Checklist for Self-Monitoring Records

As a lifestyle coach, one of the most useful things you can do to help participants be successful in making healthy lifestyle change is to offer feedback on their self-monitoring records. This is an opportunity for you to provide insight on areas for improvement, helpful ideas on how to move closer to established goals and offer encouragement. Giving meaningful feedback is not easy. That's why we put together this helpful checklist, which includes tips for reviewing self-monitoring records that address the big picture as well as the small steps that can lead to big changes.



- ❑ **Read through the entire journal first.** Before you begin to analyze each day, it is important to take a look at the big picture in order to identify major trends. Take note of patterns that exist throughout the period of time being examined.
- ❑ **Pick a color, a happy color.** Remember your school days when you would receive a paper returned from the teacher with red ink? Many of us have associations with color. When writing in a participant's tracking booklet, it's important to avoid ink colors that might carry a negative connotation, such as red.
- ❑ **Highlight positive changes.** When you see a participant doing something well, call it out. Focus in on topics that have been addressed in previous sessions. Give as much positive reinforcement as possible, avoiding the overuse of "corrective comments."
- ❑ **Comment on self-monitoring behaviors.** Keeping a detailed record is key to self-monitoring. We recommend that participants write one food or drink per line, including a description of the food, portion size, and the number of calories and fat grams. Participants should keep a running subtotal as they carry out their day, and then

calculate a final total for each day's calories, fat grams, and minutes of physical activity. These items should also be totaled for the week. Encourage participants to weigh themselves at home at least once each week and to record it. [See our "Keeping Track" booklet for a downloadable example.](#)

- ❑ **Comment on eating behaviors.** This is one of the most sensitive topics for participants, as what we choose to eat can also carry emotion meaning. Provide feedback on eating behaviors by praising the participant for using the ways to eat fewer calories, staying within fat and calorie goals, and dividing calories throughout the day.
- ❑ **Comment on physical activity.** Begin by praising all efforts to be physically active. Then, praise the participant for being active most days of the week and/or meeting their weekly goal. If they have fallen short of these goals provide encouragement and additional tips on how to integrate activity into their day.
- ❑ **Embrace the sandwich approach to giving feedback.** One approach that we've found to be particularly helpful is to use the "sandwich approach," where a positive comment is followed by a suggestion and then another positive comment.

Using the participant's self-monitoring records to provide feedback on their eating and activity behaviors is an opportunity to establish a relationship with your participants. Remember to be positive, encouraging, and nonjudgmental. Your participants will appreciate your efforts and look forward to your assistance in helping them to make healthy lifestyle changes!

Diabetes Prevention Support Center at the University of Pittsburgh

The DPP Group Lifestyle Balance™ program was adapted directly from the Diabetes Prevention Program's (DPP) successful lifestyle intervention by members of the original DPP Lifestyle Resource Core at the University of Pittsburgh. The DPP Group Lifestyle Balance™ program delivered in traditional groups has been shown to be effective in multiple studies in reducing weight, increasing physical activity, and improving other risk factors for diabetes and cardiovascular disease in the community.

DPP Group Lifestyle Balance™ training workshops are provided by experienced, expert faculty from the original DPP team, who have been implementing and evaluating this up to date DPP lifestyle intervention in a variety of community settings for more than a decade. [Check out our upcoming training sessions here!](#)