

Week 8

Relapse Prevention and Course Review





Week 8- Relapse Prevention & Course Review

Spiritual Component

- Begin the session by offering a prayer.

Physical Activity Component

- Include 10 minutes of physical activity before beginning the session, and 20 minutes after the session.

Participant Handouts

- *"Risky Situations"*
- *"Relapse Prevention"*

Learning Objectives

- To learn how to anticipate high-risk situations, and how to cope with high-risk situations concerning physical activity and healthy eating.
- To learn how to prevent short lapses from becoming relapses in previously learned PA and healthy eating behaviors.
- To review material from the 8-week course.

☞ Physical Activity Component ☞

Start with 10 minutes of physical activity (PA). Get moving and have fun!

Teaching content

☞ Review of Last Week's Material ☞

Plan to spend 5-10 minutes on this section.

- Review last week's PA and healthy eating goals
- Review last week's PA and healthy eating logs.
- Encourage participants to share their feelings and experiences about creating friendly PA and healthy eating environments.

Begin the session by encouraging participants to share their thoughts, feelings and opinions throughout the session.

☞ Scripture ☞

"Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing but the body is weak." Matthew 26:41

Offer this scripture to the participants, and ask how they think it relates to PA and healthy eating.

☞ Relapse Prevention ☞

Relapse prevention is a way of helping people anticipate and cope with inevitable "lapses" and "relapses" in the behavior change process. In this week's group, you will focus on identifying times when being physically active and eating well is likely to be difficult, planning for these times and how to cope with them, discussing "lapses" as a normal part of behavior change, and working to challenge negative thinking that can get in the way of maintaining behavior change.

☞ High Risk Situations ☞

Plan to spend 20-25 minutes on this section. This section will encourage a discussion of times that the participants think it will be difficult to keep up their progress when the class ends. These are their "high risk" situations. Research has shown that negative emotions (e.g., feeling stressed, depressed, or anxious), social conflicts (e.g., problems with co-workers, spouses, friends, or family members), and social pressure (e.g., having significant others try to persuade you to get off track or not supporting your healthy choices) are the most common types of "high-risk" situations.

Here are some suggestions for questions that may help to generate group discussion:

- Group exercises
 - "We all have "high risk" situations in which it is difficult to keep up our exercise or healthy eating. Tell us about your "high risk" situations. That is, let's try to anticipate times when it will be difficult to keep up your physical activity program or continue with your healthy eating."

- Learning material
 - Use the "*Risky Situations*" handout for participants to identify their high risk situations (don't focus on solutions yet).

This next section moves into problem solving about how participants can cope with these high-risk situations. It is best for participants to generate their own solutions - as opposed to having you or others tell them what to do and then having the participant state why that solution won't work (the "yes but" trap).

Here are some suggestions for questions that may help to generate group discussion:

- Group exercises
 - "What are some ways you think you can cope with the 'high risk' situations you identified?"
 - Follow-up with questions to prompt further discussion (mention the following ideas): reach out to others, ask for help and support, manage stress, have a plan in place to prevent or minimize these high-risk situations, self-monitor, etc.
- Learning material
 - Use the "*Risky Situations*" handout to help participants identify coping strategies for their high-risk situations.

❧ Lapses and Relapses ❧

Plan to spend 15-20 minutes on this section. The next portion of the group involves more instruction by the facilitator. Begin this section by describing the "dieter's dilemma."

The dieter is doing quite well, but one day when she is feeling tired and down, she gives in to her temptation and eats a large bowl of ice cream. She then feels guilty, and says that she "blew" her diet. These feelings of guilt and "blowing it" lead her to eat the entire $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon. The next day she concludes that she blew her diet, and goes back to her old high fat, high-calorie diet.

- Group exercises
 - "Why do you think the dieter relapsed back to her old ways?" (Note: hopefully the group will talk about how she "slipped" or had a "lapse"

and that this lapse made her feel guilty, so she had a full-blown relapse.)

This example can be used to move into a discussion of the "all-or-nothing" trap, which is a distortion in our thinking that occurs after a "lapse" and that leads to further distortions and eventually relapse. Discuss with the group that "lapses" are inevitable and normal. These lapses are part of the behavior change process. The problem is not the lapse, but how we think about the lapse. Rather than saying, "Well, I didn't do so well with my diet today, but tomorrow is a new day," we conclude, "I blew it," and go back to our old, unhealthy ways.

Here are some suggestions for questions that may help to generate group discussion.

- Group exercises
 - "What could you do if you had a lapse from your physical activity to get back on track?"
 - "If you had a lapse in your healthy eating, what could you do to get back on track?"
- Learning material
 - Refer to the *"Relapse Prevention - Facilitator's Guide"* for ideas on what to do when you have a lapse, and compare to ideas discussed in the group.

Discuss with the group that the "all-or-nothing" trap or "black-and-white thinking" is a distortion we all use. We say that we are either following our physical activity program or we are not, we are on a diet or we are off a diet. Encourage the group to try to view things in "shades of gray." Begin this section by describing "Mary the exerciser."

Mary has struggled to fit physical activity into her schedule, and has finally made her goal of being active 5 days a week. However, during a very stressful week at work, she only got in 2 physical activity sessions, when she had planned for 5. Mary viewed this as a "failure," and was very upset with herself.

Here are some suggestions for questions that may help to generate group discussion:

- Group exercises
 - "What would you point out to Mary about her week?" "Would you say this is a lapse or a relapse?"
 - Offer the following points if they are not mentioned:
 - Mary did quite well to get in two sessions. We know that any level of physical activity is better than NO physical activity.
 - No one is perfect, and we have to expect occasional lapses.

☞ Planned Lapses ☞

Plan to spend 10-15 minutes on this section. It is important to also recognize with the group that there may be times when it truly is nearly impossible to maintain healthy behaviors. Rather than setting themselves up for failure, it may be healthier to recognize these times, have "planned lapses," and have a very specific plan in place for getting back to their behaviors. Also encourage thinking in "shades of gray" here. For example, it may not be realistic to say "I won't eat a single Christmas cookie," or "I will be physically active every day while I'm out of town visiting my grandchildren" but it may be realistic to say "I won't eat more than 3 Christmas cookies after my meal," or "I will try to get in two of my physical activity sessions when I am traveling next week."

Here are some suggestions for questions that may help to generate group discussion:

- Group exercises
 - "For some of the high-risk situations you mentioned above, what would be some things you could do to ensure that they would just be a planned lapse?"
- Learning materials
 - The "*Relapse Prevention*" handout offers some suggestions to participants about what to do if they have a lapse. Compare what participants offered in the discussion to the suggestions on the handout.

Review of Materials

Plan to spend 15 minutes on this section. The last part of the session should cover reassessing long-term goals and asking participants what they will continue when classes end. Encourage a discussion about what they thought was most useful about the groups. Encourage participants to continue wearing their pedometer if they have one and keeping a PA log, as well as continuing to make healthy eating choices. Encourage them also to continue to set goals. Encourage them to ask for help and support from others. These eight weeks don't mark an end --this is really the start of their journey toward better health.

- Review
 - PA and healthy eating basics
 - Self-monitoring
 - Goal setting
 - Self-reward
 - Enlisting social support
 - Identifying personal barriers to PA and healthy eating
 - Stress management
 - Creating a healthy environment
 - Relapse prevention

Congratulate participants for completing the 8 Steps to Fitness Program, and give them a certificate of completion! Consider giving each person a reward (e.g. a Health-e-AME Physical-e-Fit magnet or water bottle). Also, consider calling each person in a month to see how he or she is doing.

Physical Activity Component

End the session with 20 minutes of PA.

"I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith." *2 Timothy 4:7*



Relapse Prevention

Facilitator Guide

What is a lapse?

A lapse is a slight error or backward slide. It is a single mistake. An example of a lapse is not being physically active for a planned session, or eating a high fat high calorie food.

What is a relapse?

A relapse is a string of lapses, with backsliding and returning to previous unhealthy behaviors. An example of a relapse is not continuing with your walking program over the summer months, or getting back to your afternoon chocolate bar routine.

How do I know if I'm off my physical activity or healthy eating program?

The "all-or-nothing" trap or "black-and-white thinking" is a distortion we all use. We say that we are either following our physical activity program or we are not, we are on a diet or we are off a diet. Try to view things in "shades of gray." So, for example, during a very stressful week at work, someone may only get in 2 physical activity sessions, when they had planned for 5. Instead of viewing this as a "failure," one might conclude that they did quite well to get in 2 sessions. We know that any level of physical activity is better than NO physical activity.

What can I do if I have a lapse?

Be honest with yourself: Admit to yourself that you have hit a bump in the road, figure out what caused you to get off track and be prepared for next time. View tomorrow as a new day and a new opportunity to get back on track.

Enlist the troops: This is the time to call on friends and loved ones for encouragement, and for some help to get going in the right direction.

Take a closer look: Recall your self-monitoring skills, and make an effort to schedule activity or resume healthy eating.

Think about your goals: Take a look at your current goals and determine if you need to revise them, or change the way you are trying to accomplish them.

Accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative: Think and act positively and try to focus on your strengths and what you have already accomplished. Avoid negative thinking, and combat those negative messages with positive ones. For example, "No one is perfect. I've been doing well all along, and tomorrow is a chance to start new."

What are some common high-risk situations?

Most of the time trouble spots are easy to spot in advance, and we can make a plan of attack for getting past them without sliding into a full relapse.

Emotional roller coasters: When our emotions are all over the place, whether we are sad, happy, angry, stressed or frustrated, we need to remind ourselves that being physically inactive, or returning to unhealthy eating is not going to help anything. In fact, often times being physically active can help us to take our mind off of our troubles and help us manage our stress.

Vacations and trips: Getting out of our routine can throw physical activity and healthy eating out of whack. When we're in a new setting with an unfamiliar schedule, our healthy lifestyle can easily be forgotten. The solution is to plan how you will maintain your physical activity: remember to bring your exercise clothes and shoes, check out your surrounding area for walking routes, or try local malls for indoor walking, and leave yourself open to trying new activities in a new place. Remember that being away from home means you will have to think more carefully about making healthy eating choices.

Holidays and special events: The holidays are always filled with friends, family and good times, and often it's hard to maintain our healthy lifestyle during these action-packed weeks. Plan ahead to make sure you can remain active: take a walk with a visitor you haven't seen for a while and catch up, plan activities for the group that involve being active, or take a few minutes out of the chaos to have some "you-time" and a little peace and quiet. To keep up with your healthy eating try these strategies: anticipate the event and the type of food that will be available, eat something before you go, and plan which foods you will need to limit (like fried foods, potato chips, and dip) and which foods are OK (like veggies, fruit, or salads). Consider bringing a healthy dish to share. Remember that holidays and special events should not turn into week-long overeating and inactivity periods!



Risky Situations

Participant Handout

What situations do you think will make it hard for you to keep up your physical activity routine?

Example: My co-workers ask me to get together after work for a bite to eat (my usual workout time)

How will you handle these situations to increase your chances of maintaining your active lifestyle?

Example: 1) Join them after my workout or 2) schedule a make up time for my workout

What situations do you think will make it hard for you to keep up your healthy eating plan?

Example: At our family reunion, we always have lots of fried foods.

How will handle these situations to increase your chances of maintaining your healthy eating?

Example: I will bring a healthy dish to the reunion, have one fried item, and then stick to the dish I brought, fruits, and veggies.

Physical Activity & Healthy Eating Log and Goals

Day	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Minutes of PA	10 20 30						
# of fruits & veggies	1 2 3 4 5 6+						

Weekly physical activity goal: _____

Weekly healthy eating goal: _____



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"Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer."

Roman 12:12