MOVE!

WEIGHT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM FOR VETERANS

Session 15
(Conquer Triggers and Cues)

New Mexico Va health care System

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- Weight Management Team Members:
  - MOVE! Coordinator, Registered Dietitian
    - Extension 4407 or 5395
  - New Mexico VA: (505) 265-1711, Extension 4407
    - Please call the MOVE! Coordinator if late or cannot make it to class.
  - Brain Kersh, PHD – Clinical Psychologist
    - Extension 1043
  - Claudia Segura, DPT – Physical Therapist
    - Extension 5280

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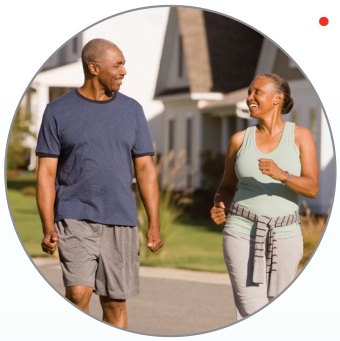
Emotions and Your Weight

Emotions often drive eating – happy, sad, excited, nervous, scared . . .

Here are some tips to help control emotional eating:

- **Eating doesn't make the problem go away!** Instead, try to deal with the problem in ways other than eating. For example, take a short walk or call a friend.
- **Think positively.** If you catch yourself thinking negatively or worrying, focus on more positive things in your life.



- **Be active.** Take a brisk walk, get on a stationary bike, or do some stretches. Exercise will make you feel better!
- **Distract yourself.** Find something else to do rather than eating. Listen to some music that lifts your spirit.
- **Avoid the kitchen.** You will be less tempted to feed your emotions.
- **Have healthy snacks readily available.** Comfort foods don't have to be unhealthy.
- **Consider getting support.** Start with family or friends. For additional assistance, consider your clergyman or talk with your health care team.

Yes! Now You're Doing It!

Congratulations! You are already doing something to lose that extra weight. Keep up the good work!

Here are tips to help you continue:

- Make a "SMART" plan to begin. **SMART stands for:**
  - **S**pecific: There are specific actions to take to reach the goal.
  - **M**easurable: You know how much to do and when the goal has been achieved.
  - **A**ction-oriented: Take action to achieve your goal(s).
  - **R**ealistic: The goal is practical given your resources and time.
  - **T**ime-based: There is a specific timeframe to achieve the goal.

  Example: "I will walk up the stairs *(Specific, Realistic, and Action-oriented)*, once daily *(Measurable)* for the next month *(Time-based)*."
- Reward yourself for achieving your daily goals.
- Arrange your environment to support your efforts to lose weight. For example:
  - Have healthy snacks readily available.
  - Avoid going to places where you usually lose control of your eating such as buffets.
  - Place reminders about weight control where you will notice them.

- Plan ahead.
  - Make your lunch at home and bring it with you.
  - Eat something healthy **before** going to a social eating event.
  - Rearrange your daily schedule to include physical activity.
- Ask for and accept support and encouragement from others.
- Focus your attention on the benefits of what you are doing, such as feeling good and improving your health.
- Stay positive, even if there are times when you have been doing all the right things but haven't lost any weight for a while. Persistence pays off.

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Control Yourself!

Food urges can be difficult to manage. Here are some tricks:

- Plan ahead, and have a solution ready for difficult situations.
- Distract yourself–immediately find something else to do.
- Drink a glass of water to fill up.
- Do not keep "trigger foods" in your home.
- Put something in your mouth like gum, a sugar-free mint, toothpick, straw, cinnamon stick, etc.
- Exercise–make yourself move!
- Call someone to get support and encouragement.
- Practice relaxation. Take a few slow, deep breaths and let your muscles go loose.
- Come up with a "guiding thought" that will make you stop. For example, "I know I want this right now, but I want to meet my goals." Repeat this when you find yourself struggling.
- Be confident that you will meet your goals…imagine yourself in the future…healthier, more fit, and proud of your accomplishments.
- Remind yourself of the progress you have made and keep going forward.
- If you know there is a strong cue for an urge, avoid the trigger if you can, alter the situation, or do something else in response to the trigger.
- Acknowledge your successes when you avoid urges.

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Eating With Others

Eating healthy with others can sometimes be difficult. Here are some tips:

- Focus on the conversation and those you are with. Tell yourself that you are there because of the company, not just the food.
- Take your time eating your food. Enjoy the taste, and savor every bite.
- Put your fork down in between every bite.
- Spend more time talking than eating.
- Drink lots of water with your meal.
- Let others know you are eating healthier. Ask for their support.
- Try eating a small, healthy snack before dining with other people so that you are not tempted to overeat.

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Lose Weight By Planning Ahead!

Plan ahead; here are some ideas:

- Set your physical activity and dietary goals.
- Plan your menu for the week.
- Go to the grocery store with a list. Stick to the list!
- Avoid going to the grocery store when you're hungry.
- Fix your plate in the kitchen and bring it to the table to eat. Leave the serving bowls in the kitchen.
- Drink plenty of water throughout the day and with your meals.
- Choose restaurants with healthy options. Avoid "all-you-can-eat" buffets.
- Don't go to a social event on an empty stomach.
- Pack a healthy meal and/or snack for work or travel.
- Make time for physical activity. Ten-minute blocks make a difference.
- Plan a physical activity that you enjoy.
- Look for a physical activity class or group you can join. Find a walking buddy.
- Join local physical activity events in your community.
- Consider activities you can do throughout the day. Take the stairs, park farther away, walk to the store, and clean your home.

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Involving Others in Your Weight Control Program

Support and encouragement from others can help you meet your weight management goals. Find others who believe in you. They can be family, friends, co-workers, clergy, or other regular contacts.

Here are some tips for making that happen:

- Ask others for encouragement. Choose people who will be good cheerleaders.
- Share your successes as well as your struggles with your support team.
- Tell your supporters what they can do to help. Be specific. For example, "Every week or so, ask me how I am doing," "Ask me to be your walking buddy," or "Please don't offer me junk food."
- Let them know that their support is extremely helpful.
- Tell your advocates that you need encouragement now and in the future. Weight management is a lifelong commitment.
- Start the conversation about your progress.
- Pay it forward. Support others in their efforts to be healthier.

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- Your "Homework" This Week:

- Behavior:
- 1. Identify 1-2 tricks to manage food urges and try the tricks.
- 2. Select one tip from B27 handout (Involving Others in Your Weight Control Program).
- 3. Bring the handout "Why I have joined the *MOVE!* Program" from session 1 that you filled out.

- Nutritional: Last week. Keep a food log everyday. Compare your first and your most recent food logs. What changes do you see?

- Physical Activity: Keep an activity log daily.