

Week 6

Enlisting Social Support & Stress Management





Week 6- Enlisting Social Support & Stress Management

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 at the end of the session.

Participant Handouts

- *"Types of Social Support"*
- *"Finding the Support You Need"*
- *"Stress Management"*

Learning Objectives

- To learn the kinds of support you need for sustaining physical activity and healthy eating in your life.
- To identify key sources of support for maintaining PA and healthy eating habits.
- To learn about the risk of stress, identify stressful situations and explore techniques for reducing stress.

☞ Physical Activity Component ☞

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

Teaching Content

☞ Review of Last Week's Materials ☞

Plan to spend 5-10 minutes on this section.

Encourage participants to share strategies for solving the barriers they identified to PA and healthy eating.

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

☞ Scripture ☞

"Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls down and has no one to help him up!" *Ecclesiastes 4:9-10*.

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

☞ Importance of Support for Physical Activity and Healthy Eating ☞

The truth is, we can all use help once in a while. It has been shown that social support is a crucial ingredient to making a successful change in your life.

Plan to spend 10-15 minutes on this section. This section should emphasize all the kinds of support that can help sustain PA and healthy eating habits in your life. Encourage participant to discuss the various types of support and have the group can generate examples related to PA and eating healthy.

The following handout is provided:

- "*Types of Social Support*"
 - Encouragement and praise can be great motivators, especially on days when you wonder if all of your hard work is really paying off. The Bible confirms our need to rely on one another for strength and comfort, reminding us in source that, "a cord of three strands is not quickly broken."

☞ Sources of Social Support ☞

Plan to spend 10-15 minutes on this section. This section is designed to help participants seek support for maintaining PA and healthy eating habits in their daily lives.

The following handout is provided:

- "*Finding the Support You Need*"

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

- "What type of support would help you to keep up your physical activity?"

- “What type of support would help you to keep up your healthy eating?”
 - Encourage participants to discuss their support network of family, friends, neighbors and co-workers and how these people might support their healthy lifestyle change.

☞ Stress Reduction ☞

Plan to spend 10-15 minutes on this section. The stress of a new job, an illness, or a move can undermine your attempts to be physically active. In this session, participants will learn about stress, the cause and symptoms, and techniques for stress management.

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

- “What is stress and how does it affect the body?”
- “What are some good things and some bad things about stress?”

To help participants understand how to manage stress, the following handout is provided:

- “*Stress Management*”
 - Encourage participants to discuss ways that stress affects their efforts to be active and eat healthy foods.
 - Encourage participants to share strategies to reduce stress. Have participants share strategies that have worked for them. (Be sure to mention the following if they are not discussed: bubble baths, exercise, deep breathing exercises, yoga, meditation, walking, praying, singing, t'ai chi, or talking with friends)

☞ Homework ☞

- Complete weekly PA & Healthy Eating Log and Goals on the “*Finding the Support You Need*” handout.
- Now that a list of supporters has been created, encourage participants to make a plan to talk with them to ask for the support they need.

☞ Physical Activity Component ☞

End the session with 15 minutes of PA.



Types of Social Support

Participant handout

Emotional Support: This involves feelings of love, caring, reassurance, and concern, providing you with an overall sense of comfort and being loved through both good and bad times.

Example: Someone who is a good listener, or a shoulder to cry on.

Motivational Support: Typically, this kind of support comes from others who offer encouragement and motivation and increase your feelings of self-worth and competence. An exercise partner or group can provide this support by sharing similar beliefs and goals.

Example: An upbeat and enthusiastic friend or family member cheering on your efforts to be more physically active and eat healthier.

Informational Support. This includes giving advice, directions or suggestions about how you are doing with your behavioral changes. Books, videos, newspaper, magazines, and/or television can provide information -- but be mindful of quick fixes that really are too good to be true.

Example: Health professionals are a good source of information about questions you may have about physical activity and healthy eating and how they relate to your health.

Tangible Support. This includes direct assistance and help that makes it easier for you to make physical activity and healthy eating a permanent part of your life.

Example: A family member or friend who can watch your children to give you time for your walk in the evenings, or a friend willing to meet you for your morning walk.



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Finding the Support You Need
Participant Handout

What kind of support would I like?	Who could provide this support?	How could they help?	How could I thank them?
Example: Remembering to fit in go for my morning walk	My sister Mary or my co-worker	They could call me the night before to remind me to leave out my walking shoes.	I could take him or her to a movie or give him or her a big hug.

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: _____



Stress Management

Participant Handout

WHAT IS STRESS?

Stress is the body's natural response to any external or internal demands or pressures. A little stress is a good thing. Stress is what causes us to grow, improve, and progress. Excessive stress and/or poor stress management is unhealthy, impedes progress, and causes deterioration.

Causes of Stress

The causes of stress can be called "stressors" or "triggers." There are two causes of stressors: external and internal.

External Stressors include:

- Physical environment: noise, bright lights, heat, confined spaces.
- Social (interaction with people): rudeness, bossiness or aggressiveness.
- Organizational: rules, regulations, "red tape," deadlines.
- Major life events: death of a relative, lost job, promotion, new baby

Internal stressors include:

- Lifestyle choices: caffeine, not enough sleep, overloaded schedule
- Negative self-talk: pessimistic thinking, self-criticism, over-analyzing.
- Mind traps: unrealistic expectations or taking things personally.

The Ten Commandments for Managing Life's Stresses

1. Thou shalt regularly do those things that are most enjoyable to thee.
2. Thou shalt take time to physically relax or meditate for at least 15 minutes each day.
3. Thou shalt exercise aerobically 5 times each week.
4. Thou shalt sleep 7-8 hours each night.
5. Thou shalt not take thyself so seriously.
6. Thou shalt scream at the top of thy lungs from time to time.
7. Thou shalt write in thy journal each day.
8. Thou shalt eat a healthy, balanced diet
9. Thou shalt do the important things first.
10. Thou shalt go with the flow of life.

Common Symptoms of Stress

Physical: Fatigue, headache, insomnia, muscle aches/stiffness, chest pains and tension.

Mental: decrease in concentration and memory, indecisiveness, mind racing or going blank.

Emotional: anxiety, nervousness, depression, anger, frustration, worry, fear, irritability, impatience, short temper.

Behavioral: pacing, fidgeting, nervous habits, increased eating, smoking, drinking, crying, yelling and swearing.