

Lifestyle Coach Facilitation Guide: Core

Session 12: The Slippery Slope of Lifestyle Change

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Background and Preparation

Preparation Checklist

Materials

These are the materials you will use during Session 12.

- Participant handouts for Session 12:
 - Session 12 Overview
 - Progress Review
 - The Slippery Slope of Lifestyle Change
 - After a Slip
 - Slips from Healthy Eating: Action Plan
 - Slips from Being Active: Action Plan
 - To Do Next Week

- “Food and Activity Trackers” for Session 12

- Lifestyle Coach’s Log

- Name tags or tents from previous week, if still needed

- Flip chart or chalk board supplies

- Balance scale

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Before you begin

- ❑ Review each participant's progress since Session 7 ("Tip the Calorie Balance"). Note what plans were made to improve weight loss and activity level, which strategies were used, and which were successful or unsuccessful. If a participant is not at goal for weight loss or activity, refer to previous lessons for ideas of strategies (required or optional) to overcome particular problems.
- ❑ If time allows, review participants' "Food and Activity Trackers" from prior sessions. Note some of the positive changes participants made.
- ❑ Make sure the participants' "How Am I Doing? Weight" and "How Am I Doing? Physical Activity" charts are up to date.
- ❑ Choose a private place to weigh participants.
- ❑ If still needed, prepare name tags or set up the classroom with name tents from the previous week.
- ❑ Prepare Session 12 handouts to distribute at the start of the session.
- ❑ Have Lifestyle Coach's Log ready for weigh-ins.

Lifestyle Coach Brief

Learning objectives

At the close of this session, the participants will be able to –

- Describe their current progress toward defined goals.
- Describe common causes for slipping from healthy eating or being active.
- Explain what to do to get back on their feet after a slip.

Session 12 overview

We move from recognizing and talking back to negative thoughts to the bigger problem of coping with slips from healthy eating and physical activity. This session helps participants 1) to keep a positive perspective on their efforts to make long-term lifestyle changes and 2) to understand that setbacks are common.

Session 12 is divided into four parts:

Part 1: Weekly Progress and Review (5 minutes)

Discuss how well participants succeeded in achieving their goals for the past week. Address any challenges or barriers they encountered. Ask participants to share their experiences in replacing negative thoughts with positive thoughts.

Part 2: Checking Your Progress (20 minutes)

Today is the first time the participants analyze their progress since the early sessions. Ask participants to share their individual progress. How are they doing? How are they progressing? Individual experiences frequently turn out to be common experiences among the other group members. The realization that most participants have similar experiences and challenges usually leads to a valuable group discussion. Use the concepts to be discussed during this session to recommend ways participants can get back on track if they experience a slip.

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Usually a group discussion about a unique individual problem is not productive. Therefore, if someone requests help for a problem that is inappropriate for group discussion, defer offering help until after the session.

Part 3: Slips in Progress (30 minutes)

Discuss why we slip, and introduce some common causes for slipping in our progress toward our weight and activity goals. You will go over what to do after participants have a slip and how they can get back on track. Encourage participants to share accounts of their own slips.

Part 4: Wrap Up and To-Do List (5 minutes)

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Key messages

- Slipping off the path to healthy eating and adequate physical activity is natural, normal, and usual. You can learn from slips.
- When you slip, don't give up. Keep a positive attitude, and regain control as soon as possible. Remember slipping is not the end of your hopes for a healthy lifestyle.
- Slips are opportunities to learn about the cues that lead to slips and to understand the negative or self-defeating thoughts we have after a slip.
- When you slip, talk back to negative thoughts with positive thoughts.

Classroom Presentation

Part 1: Weekly Progress and Review

Estimated time: 5 minutes

Weigh-In	Notes
<p>Weigh participants privately, and have them record their weight on the “How Am I Doing? Weight” chart.</p> <p>Record participants’ weight in your Lifestyle Coach’s Log.</p> <p>Distribute:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Session 12 handouts to insert into the Participant Notebooks.• Session 12 “Food and Activity Trackers.”• Session 10 “Food and Activity Trackers” with your notes. <p>Collect Session 11 “Food and Activity Trackers.”</p>	
Week in Review	Notes
<p>Discuss participants’ successes and difficulties in meeting their weight loss goals.</p> <p>Ask: Did you have any trouble keeping track last week? Were you able to stay within your fat gram budget? Did you reach your goal for physical activity? Did you have any trouble graphing your weight and activity?</p> <p>Open responses.</p> <p>Praise <i>all progress</i>, no matter how small.</p> <p>Help participants graph their physical activity, if needed.</p>	

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Present: Last week, we talked about how to deal with negative thoughts that can prevent us from meeting our goals of losing weight and being more physically active. We learned some ways to stop negative thoughts and practiced talking back to negative thoughts with positive ones.

Ask: What negative thoughts did you catch yourself thinking? Were you able to stop them and talk back with positive thoughts?

Open responses.

Address any questions or difficulties.

This Week

Notes

Present: This week we will —

- Take a look at your progress toward your goals and make adjustments if needed.
- Talk about some common causes for slipping off the path toward healthy eating or being active.
- Discuss how to get back on your feet after a slip.

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Part 2: Checking Your Progress

Estimated time: 20 minutes

Review

Notes

Present: Today we are going to talk about *slips*: times when you do not follow your plans for healthy eating or being active. However, before we talk about slips, let's review your progress since Session 7, which was the last time we formally looked at how you are doing. We will look at how you are progressing toward your goals, and I'll help you improve your progress, if needed.

Ask for volunteers to share personal challenges and successes they had during the last four or five weeks.

Encourage group discussion.

Present: What steps did you take to overcome the challenges? And to what do you attribute your successes?

Open responses.



Refer participants to the "Progress Review" handout in the Participant Notebook and the "How Am I Doing?" charts for weight and physical activity.



Present: Let's take a look at how you are doing, and record your progress on this handout.

Ask participants the following questions about progress:

Activity: What major changes did you make to be more active? Include both what you do to reach your goal (that is, the activities you record) and what you do to be more active in general (the lifestyle activity you do not record such as taking the stairs instead of an elevator).

Food: What changes did you make to eat less fat and fewer calories?

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Look at your “How Am I Doing?” charts. Have you reached your goal weight? Your activity goal? Check “yes” or “no” on the handout.



Note to Lifestyle Coach

Encourage participants to discuss their progress. Congratulate participants who are on track or at goal for weight loss and activity. Praise participants who are not at goal for whatever progress they made.

Encourage the participants who are slow to achieve their goals to develop a plan for doing so, and write the plan on the handout.

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Part 3: Slips in Progress

Estimated time: 30 minutes

What Are Slips?

Notes

Present: Now let's move on to the topic for today: slips.

Slips are times when you do not follow your plans for healthy eating or physical activity. Slips are —

- **A normal part of lifestyle change.** Just like falling down is a normal part of skiing. If you ski, you are going to fall sometimes. All skiers fall from time to time. And everyone who sets out to lose weight and be more active will slip.
- **To be expected.** If you have not already had some slips, you will almost certainly have them in the future. Slips are nearly inevitable.

Does this sound discouraging? Well, it does not have to be, because slips do not hurt your progress. What hurts your progress is the way you react to slips, so today we will talk about the best way to react to slips when they happen.

Let's use **skiing** as an example.

Share this example:

Everyone learning to ski knows that he or she will slip and fall. It is a natural part of learning to ski. Skiing instructors tell beginning skiers to anticipate falls and show them how to get up after they fall. That's what we will do today — talk about when you slip from your eating and activity plans and how you can get back on track again after you slip.

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Note to Lifestyle Coach

Throughout this session, try to use analogies (in addition to skiing) that are meaningful to the participants.

One possibility is how we handle fires. First, we look for high-risk situations in which fires are likely to occur. Second, we take steps to avoid these situations if we can. Third, in case a fire does occur, we plan a way to put out the fire or to 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.

In addition, create analogies between learning a new lifestyle and learning other skills such as driving, baking, even walking. Usually we learn by trial and error, by making mistakes and learning from them.

Why We Slip

Notes

Present: Everyone has different reasons for slipping. Earlier, we talked about many cues for eating and inactivity. Moods or feelings cause many people to slip from healthy eating. Some of us tend to overeat when we are *happy*.

Share this example:

Imagine that your family is celebrating a holiday, a birthday, or a vacation. There is plenty of everyone's favorite food, from appetizers to desserts. For years, your family's custom has been to take it easy, have fun, and relax during these times.

Ask: What would this situation be like for you? Would you tend to slip in this kind of situation?

Open responses.

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Present: Some of us are more vulnerable to overeating when we are *bored*.

Share this example:

Imagine you are at home alone, watching a favorite TV program. You are feeling okay, pretty relaxed, but a little bored. A commercial comes on at the end of the program. What do you do?

Ask: Do you find yourself wandering into the kitchen?

Open responses.

Present: Other people overeat when they are *upset*.

Share this example:

Imagine you are settling down for a relaxing evening at home. A family member brings up a topic that is upsetting to you. You both get angry, and the family member stomps out of the house, slamming the door. What do you do?

Ask: Would you head for the kitchen?

Open responses.

Present: Here's another example:

You're behind on a project at work. The boss looks in on you every 10 minutes, glaring impatiently. You feel pressured and tense. You go for a cup of coffee and see a delicious snack that someone brought in that morning.

Ask: What would this situation be like for you?

Open responses.

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Ask: Which is the most difficult for you in terms of slipping from healthy eating: feeling happy, bored, upset, or anxious?

Open responses.



Refer participants to the “The Slippery Slope of Lifestyle Change” handout in the Participant Notebook.

Present: On your handout, take a moment to write the things that cause you to slip from healthy eating and physical activity.

Ask for volunteers to share what they wrote.

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Note to Lifestyle Coach

If no one volunteers, ask whether anyone is more likely to slip at certain times: on vacation, at holiday parties, in certain moods, during cold or hot weather.

Present: The situations that lead to slips differ from person to person. For example, when bored, one person tends to eat and someone else gets involved in a hobby. At a party, one person is so busy talking and laughing that he forgets to eat but someone else focuses on the goodies and overeats.

After You Slip

Notes

Present: Slips are learned habits, making them difficult to avoid completely. When you slip, you have several options for getting back on track and moving toward your goals.

After you slip –

- 1. Talk back to negative thoughts with positive thoughts.**

Negative thoughts after a slip can be your worst enemy. They can lead to your feeling discouraged, guilty, and angry. They can undermine your ability to handle the slip. Talk back to the negative thoughts with positive ones. "I am not a failure because I slipped. I will get back on my feet again."

2. Ask yourself what happened.

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 because you were 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?

3. Regain control as soon as you can.

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

4. Talk to someone supportive.

"Talk it through; do not eat it through." Call your Lifestyle Coach or someone else on the program staff. Call another program participant or a friend or family member. Discuss your new strategy for handling slips. Commit yourself to renewed effort.

5. Focus on all the positive changes you made, and realize that you can get back on track.

The same person who blew it today is the same person who was successful during many previous weeks. Slips do not reveal the real you, (hopeless, lacking willpower); they are simply a behavior that can be changed.

Present: Use these five sets of questions to think about your slip objectively.

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Present: Here are some tips about slips:

- **Learn from the slip.** You can then plan how to handle the situation better next time.
- **Think about how you can avoid similar situations.** For example, you could decide not to stand near the food at a party or not to walk past the candy machine.
- **If you cannot avoid a situation, think about how you can manage it in a better way.** For example, make sure you have low-calorie foods available at home and work, or bring a healthy dish to a party.
- Remember, **you are making life-long changes.** Slips are just part of the process.

Getting Back on Track

Notes

Present: Earlier we said that what causes us to slip is a habit. And the way we 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.

Remember two things:

- **Slips are normal and to be expected.** Almost everyone who is on the way to losing weight and being more active has slips. But a slip does not need to lead to giving up completely. Slips are useful learning experiences.
- **No one time of overeating or not being active, no matter how extreme, will ruin everything.** You will not 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. The slip is not the problem. The problem occurs only if you do not get back on your feet again and keep going toward your goals.

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Part 4: Wrap Up and To-Do List

Estimated time: 5 minutes

To Do Next Week

Notes

Present: Now, let's create an action plan for 1) how to recover from slips as you work toward your goals and 2) how to avoid having slips as you move forward.



Refer participants to the “Slips from Healthy Eating: Action Plan” and “Slips from Being Active: Action Plan” handouts in the Participant Notebook.



Complete the handouts.

1. Describe one thing that caused you to slip from *healthy eating*. Can you avoid it in the future? If so, how? If you're not sure you can avoid it, plan how to get back on your feet the next time you slip.
2. Describe one thing that caused you to slip from *being active*. Can you avoid it in the future? If so, how will you do so? If you're not sure you can avoid it, plan how to get back on your feet the next time you slip.



Refer participants to the “To Do Next Week” handout in the Participant Notebook.

Present: For next week:

- Keep track of your eating and activity.
- Try your two action plans.
- Answer the questions on the handout.

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Closing

Notes

Summarize key points:

- Slips are a normal part of changing behavior.
- When you slip, it is important to change the habit that caused the slip and your habitual reaction to the slip.
- Slipping is not failure. Learn from your slip. Figure out what you need to do to get back on track and keep moving forward.

Close: As you begin your week, consider the strategies we discussed about slipping. Try to regain focus, but do not worry about slips: slips happen. What's important is to get back on your feet. Just do your best.

Ask participants whether they have any questions before closing the session.

Make announcements about time or location changes, contact information, and any other issues.

After the session:

- Write notes on participants' successes and, when necessary, recommend changes in the participants' "Food and Activity Trackers" from Session 11.
- Write the physical activity minutes recorded in the participants' "Food and Activity Trackers" in your Lifestyle Coach's Log.
- Use your Notes and Homework page at the end of this guide to write notes about the session.

