

Lifestyle Coach Facilitation Guide: Post-Core

Handling Holidays, Vacations, and Special Events

Content Overview

This session addresses the difficulties of maintaining a healthy lifestyle during holidays, vacations, and special events. Strategies are suggested for handling these special occasions: anticipating the event, avoiding or reducing stress, building in ways to be active, and preparing for the personality and habits of friends and family. Participants examine their priorities during these times and think about ways to make time for a healthy lifestyle during special occasions.

Lifestyle Coach Preparation Checklist

Materials

- Post-core handouts:
 - Ways to Handle Special Occasions (3)
 - Planning Ahead
 - Reflect On What's Important to You
 - Making Time for a Healthy Lifestyle
- "Food and Activity Trackers"
- "Lifestyle Coach's Log"
- Balance scale

Key messages to reinforce

- Proper planning can help you maintain your healthy lifestyle during holidays, vacations, and special events.
- Build in ways to eat healthy and be physically active during special occasions.
- Set realistic expectations for special occasions.
- Recognize that time is often the biggest barrier to a healthy lifestyle during special occasions. Plan for ways to make time for things that are important to you.

After the session

At the completion of this session, do the following:

- Use the “Notes and Homework Page” for notes and follow-up tasks.
- Distribute “Food and Activity Trackers” (4) for the following month.



Ways to Handle Holidays, Vacations, and Special Events

Present: Many people find it difficult to eat healthy and stay active during holidays, vacations, and special events. Social events are common during these times, and food is often a large part of the celebration. Good food and good times seem to go hand in hand.

However, as we have all learned during the program, social eating can be a challenge for those of us trying to lose or maintain weight. Food choices at social events can be limited and may not involve healthy choices. Relationships with friends and family can also play a role; other people may influence how and what you eat.

Ask: Can anyone share any tactics they have used to handle special events?

Ways to Handle Special Occasions Include:

1. Anticipate the event

- Think about what foods and drinks will be served and if you can make special requests (i.e., salad dressing on the side, club soda with lime to drink, a lean meat or vegetarian item).
- Plan out how you will spend your fat grams and calories for the day (e.g., “bank”).
- Think ahead about ways to control your calories during the evening (i.e., drinking lots of water, limiting appetizers and desserts, etc.).
- Focus on the non-eating aspects of the event that you enjoy.

2. Plan pleasures other than food or drink

- Plan the kind of holiday, vacation, or special event that **you want**, and make it healthy!
- Think about what you can do to stay active. Can you make physical activity a part of your holiday, vacation, or special event? A morning or evening walk, swimming laps, or dancing could easily fit the bill.

3. Hold a family meeting ahead of time

- How will we handle food and eating out?
- Can we find a fun way to all be physically active this year?
- Ask your family to agree to encourage you to eat healthy and be physically active.
- Talk about other ways your family can help you maintain your goals.

4. Set reasonable expectations

- Continue to keep track of your eating and physical activity.
- Weigh yourself often, if possible. Don't forget that scales differ.
- Plan to **maintain** your weight – it may not be realistic to expect to lose weight.
- Let go a little. Eat something special – choose the best, and have a small portion.

5. Avoid or reduce stress caused by holidays, vacations, or special events

- Avoid trying to please others more than yourself.
- Plan daily times to relax.

6. Decide what to do about alcohol

- Drinking alcohol may lower self-control, making you more likely to eat and drink beyond what you otherwise would.
- If you drink, be aware of the calories you are consuming.

7. Build in ways to be active

- Be a little more active with any extra time you have.
- Park further away and walk when doing holiday errands or sight-seeing.
- Look for seasonal ways to be active that can become traditions, such as visiting parks, window shopping at a brisk pace, or even sledding.

8. Prepare for the personalities and habits of friends and family

- If you have a relative who likes to push food on everyone, or a friend who is constantly refilling your wine glass, mentally prepare for how you will handle the situation.

9. Plan for pleasures *after* holidays, vacations, or special events

- Sometimes after the holidays or special events, people get the “blahs” and lose motivation to continue their healthy habits. In order to help avoid those feelings, plan something to look forward to in the near future (such as a weekend trip in February, or a day spent with friends after a vacation).



Planning Ahead

Despite the challenges, healthy eating and being active **are** possible during holidays, vacations, and special events. The key is to **plan ahead**.

Ask: Think about a holiday, vacation, or special event that is in the near future:

1. What problems related to food might come up?

2. Choose one problem. List some ways to handle it.

3. Choose the best solution.

➤ What will you need to do to make that happen?

➤ How will you handle things that might get in the way?

4. Plan a non-food reward (new item of clothing, time for reading, weekend away) for yourself if you are able to follow your plan.

➤ What will the reward be?

➤ What will you need to do to earn that reward?



Making Time for a Healthy Lifestyle

Present: Let's look at some ways that holidays, vacations, and special events tend to get in the way of maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Ask: Think about the following actions and whether or not you have a difficult time continuing them during special occasions.

When I get busy during special occasions, I tend to neglect the following behaviors:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Keeping track of what I eat | <input type="checkbox"/> Talking back to negative thoughts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Keeping track of physical activity | <input type="checkbox"/> Changing problem cues (food, social, or activity cues) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Doing physical activity | <input type="checkbox"/> Adding helpful cues (food, social, or activity cues) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cooking low-calorie and low-fat foods | <input type="checkbox"/> Problem solving things that get in the way of my healthy lifestyle goals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Planning ahead when I eat out | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify): |

Some possible ways to MAKE TIME to do the above things:

1. Cut back on these activities that are LESS important to me:
2. Make time for healthy eating/physical activity by (brainstorm):
 - Choose the best solution

What might get in the way? How will I handle this?

