



MODULE EIGHT

Managing Weight-Loss Challenges



How do I solve problems?

While working through the MOVE! Program, challenges and barriers will occur. It is normal to encounter challenges when you are making significant changes to your lifestyle. There are many common barriers that Veterans face when trying to better manage their weight. Being able to recognize those barriers will help you get past them.

“I’m not going to say my road was easy. It’s just like life... life isn’t always easy. But I’m confident I can keep the weight off.”

– James, lost 350 pounds over a 20-year lifestyle change journey

This module will review the process of problem solving. When facing unfamiliar problems, it is important to think about what you can control and what you can’t—and then focus your energy on the things you can control.

In This Module You Will:

1. Identify common weight-loss challenges.
2. Outline the steps to problem solving.
3. Select strategies that work for you to bust barriers.

Progress Check-In



I met my previous healthy eating goal

I met my previous physical activity goal

My weight today is _____ pounds.

Reflect on how well you met your goals from the last module.

What successes did you have?

What challenges did you encounter?

What helped you address those challenges?



Even the Smallest Changes Can Make a Big Difference

What benefits did you notice from your weight-loss efforts this past week?

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Better sleep | <input type="checkbox"/> More energy | <input type="checkbox"/> Fewer prescription medications |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Better check-up | <input type="checkbox"/> Less joint pain | <input type="checkbox"/> Better blood pressure control |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Improved memory | <input type="checkbox"/> Better mood | <input type="checkbox"/> Better blood sugar control |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clothes fit better | <input type="checkbox"/> Improved cooking | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stress relief | <input type="checkbox"/> Greater confidence | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More endurance | <input type="checkbox"/> More organized | _____ |

Common Weight Management Challenges

SPECIAL OCCASIONS

Special Occasions can present challenges because your daily routine can be interrupted.

- Eating out (fast food or restaurants)
- Socializing over food, picnics, and parties
- Traveling



THOUGHTS AND EMOTIONS

Thoughts and Emotions can slow down weight-loss efforts.

- Lack of confidence or motivation
- Boredom
- Stress
- Depression or anxiety



LIMITED RESOURCES

Limited Resources can hinder your ability to successfully manage your weight.

- Not enough money
- Lack of proper clothing and equipment
- Limited access to healthy food
- Lack of proper cooking utensils



LIMITED SUPPORT FROM OTHERS

Limited Support from Others can feel like an uphill battle for things like:

- Buying healthy foods
- Cooking healthy foods
- Being physically active



LIMITED TIME

Limited Time is one of the most common weight management challenges. It can be difficult to find time for:

- Physical activity
- Planning and preparing meals
- Shopping for healthy foods



MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Medical Conditions can get in the way of managing weight.

- Chronic conditions
- Pain
- Limited mobility



Steps to Problem Solving

Encountering challenges or barriers can be discouraging and stressful, and can interfere with weight-loss efforts. Sometimes our thoughts, feelings, or lack of support or resources get in the way of meeting weight-loss goals. People can respond to challenges in unproductive ways: letting the problem control them, acting too quickly, trying solutions that don't fit their situation, or giving up. Even though weight-loss challenges may prove to be difficult, learning how to overcome them is important. **When new barriers arise during your weight-loss journey, use the steps to problem solving to work through a challenge or barrier and find a resolution that will work for you.**



Tom's Toolkit

"Problem solving is an essential element in your weight management toolkit. Use the steps below to define and address weight-loss challenges you encounter."

<p>Step 1 Clearly describe your problem. <i>What is the challenge you are facing?</i></p>	<p>It is important to clearly define the problem before trying to solve it. 1) Learn all the available facts. 2) Separate facts from assumptions. 3) Find out what makes the situation a problem. 4) Set realistic goals about the situation.</p>
<p>Step 2 Come up with options. <i>What are some ways to solve your problem?</i></p>	<p>Brainstorming is a fantastic way to come up with solutions to a problem and stay focused. Come up with as many solutions as possible. Put off your judgment until later; consider every idea you have. Refine your possibilities by combining or changing ideas you've already listed.</p>
<p>Step 3 Pick the best option. <i>Which of those options would work best to solve your problem?</i></p>	<p>Evaluate your choices to determine which of the possible solutions is best. Think about maximizing positive effects and minimizing negative effects of the solution. Think about which solution will be effective, whether you can overcome the obstacles to solving the problem, and whether you will carry out the solution. Consider the effects of the possible solution on yourself and others. Now you are ready to compare your solutions and choose the best option.</p>
<p>Step 4 Make an action plan. <i>How will you put those choices into practice?</i></p>	<p>Consider how you will put your solution into practice. It is important not to be worried about failure. If the solution doesn't work, you can always go back to earlier steps and try a different solution.</p>
<p>Step 5 Try it. <i>How did it go?</i></p>	<p>Plan how you will decide if the solution is successful before you carry it out. Your plan should use simple, concrete language.</p>



Teresa's Tips

“When faced with weight-loss challenges, it is best to focus your attention on things you can control. When barriers emerge, ask yourself if this is something you have control over. Some challenges may not be in your control to solve. Instead, consider what aspects of the problem may be under your control. Barriers and weight-loss challenges will occur regularly during your weight management journey. Don't sweat the barriers you can't control but find the opportunities you can.”

Paulo's Problem

Paulo is overweight with diabetes and COPD (breathing problem), and he wants to start living a healthier lifestyle by changing his eating and physical activity habits. Paulo saw a flyer for the VA MOVE! Program at his local outpatient clinic and decides this is just the thing he needs to kickstart his healthy living. For the first two months, Paulo does great with his eating and activity goals and loses 15 pounds.

But recently Paulo's workload has increased a great deal, so he starts going to work early and working through his lunch. As a result, he starts to miss his daily walks. He also doesn't have time to pack his lunch in the morning, so he grabs a snack from the vending machine. After a week, Paulo reports back to his MOVE! Group and is mad at himself for getting off track with his eating and fitness goals. He has gained three pounds at his weekly weigh-in. He feels like a failure and is thinking about giving up.

Paulo's MOVE! group members help him think about ways to get back on track and use the five steps to problem solving to identify a solution. Paulo decides he has two problems to address.

“Using all the tools they give you makes the program a success. I still use the tools they taught me.”

– Stephen, lost 80 pounds



Paulo's Problem Solving

	Problem 1	Problem 2
<p>Step 1 Clearly describe your problem. <i>What is the challenge you are facing?</i></p>	<p>Paulo doesn't have a healthy lunch each day. He leaves for work early, so he doesn't have time to pack his lunch each morning.</p>	<p>Paulo doesn't get enough activity each day. He sits at his desk and works through lunch.</p>
<p>Step 2 Come up with options. <i>What are some ways to solve your problem?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pack his lunch the night before • Keep a stash of healthy snacks at work • Ask a friend or family member to pack his lunch for him • Shop for items that he can pack quickly, like fruit and yogurt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk outside or around the office • Be more active during evenings and weekends • Take the stairs instead of the elevator • Ride his bike to work • Park in a distant spot of the lot at work • Use a stand-up desk
<p>Step 3 Pick the best option. <i>Which of those options would work best to solve your problem?</i></p>	<p>Paulo decides the best choice is to pack his lunch the night before.</p>	<p>Paulo decides that he first wants to try and be more active during the evenings and weekends.</p>
<p>Step 4 Make an action plan. <i>How will you put those choices into practice?</i></p>	<p>Paulo sets a reminder on his phone each night to pack his lunch before he goes to bed.</p>	<p>Paulo asks his wife and son if they will go on evening walks with him to help him stay on track.</p>
<p>Step 5 Try it. <i>How did it go?</i></p>	<p>This worked well for Paulo. He packs his lunch with dinner leftovers or makes a sandwich along with fruit, yogurt, and nuts.</p>	<p>Getting his family involved helped Paulo stick to this new exercise routine.</p>

Practice Problem Solving

Now let's practice using the steps to problem solving to find solutions to a few of your current barriers. Use the table below to step through the problem-solving process.

	Problem 1	Problem 2
<p>Step 1 Clearly describe your problem. <i>What is the challenge you are facing?</i></p>		
<p>Step 2 Come up with options. <i>What are some ways to solve your problem?</i></p>		
<p>Step 3 Pick the best option. <i>Which of those options would work best to solve your problem?</i></p>		
<p>Step 4 Make an action plan. <i>How will you put those choices into practice?</i></p>		
<p>Step 5 Try it. <i>How did it go?</i></p>		

Weight Plateaus

After several weeks of making lifestyle changes and losing weight, you may experience a time when your weight stays the same for a while despite eating fewer calories, having a healthier diet, and being more active. This is called a plateau, which may be due to changes in your body, your behavior, or both. **Everyone who has lost weight for an extended period has experienced a plateau.**

A plateau is the failure to lose at least 1 pound in a 3-week period when you are adhering to a low-calorie diet and consistent exercise program. It can be frustrating to be working hard and not lose weight, but you can deal successfully with a plateau if you have a plan.

What are your thoughts and feelings when the scale doesn't budge?

If you're frustrated or discouraged by a weight loss plateau, there are some questions you can ask yourself:

	Yes	No
Am I self-monitoring my calorie intake accurately?		
Am I estimating my portion sizes accurately?		
Based on my current weight, am I restricting my calories enough to lose weight?		
Am I meeting my weekly goal for physical activity?		

Did you answer "no" to any of the questions? If so, what could you do to return to the behaviors that brought you success?

Getting the Scale Moving Again

It is natural to get less accurate with food records over time, which can add up to us eating too many calories.

1) Meet your calorie goal while maximizing the accuracy of weekly records

- a) Look up portion sizes and measure all the foods you eat until you know what the recommended portion of each food looks like.
- b) Always keep your weekly record with you and record what you eat as soon as you finish eating (or even before you start eating).
- c) Each time you write something down, think back to see if you ate something since you last recorded—and write it down now.
- d) Remember to add in sources of “hidden” calories (like the oil used in cooking, mayonnaise on a sandwich, sugar and creamer in coffee, etc.).
- e) Look at the quality of your diet as nutrition can also affect weight loss.



It is also easy to slip on our exercise habits over time which can also keep us from losing weight. Physical activity is a key component of long-term weight loss.

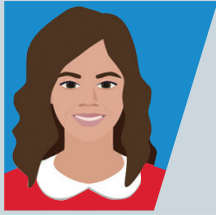
2) Meet your physical activity and step goal consistently

- a) Wear your pedometer daily and meet your step goals.
- b) Exercise most or all days of the week.



“One important concept my coach worked me through is accepting that you plateau at different steps and that it’s not all going to be downhill. I can’t beat myself up or be hard on myself. I weigh myself every morning and mark it on my calendar. It’s gratifying, but also a kick in the butt.”

– Peggy, lost 165 pounds



Teresa's Tips

"Engage your family members and friends from the start of your weight-loss journey to build a support system that can help you problem solve when barriers arise."

Goal-Setting Check-Out

Goals for Next Week

Set one new healthy eating and physical activity goal to work on over the next week. Remember to make it SMART (see Module 1).

Healthy Eating:

I will _____



Physical Activity:

I will _____

If you had trouble meeting your goals from last week, what will you do differently this week?

Reasons for participating in a weight management program can change over time. Reflect on why you started the MOVE! Program and write down what matters most to you now.

Module Summary

Common Weight Management Challenges

The process of implementing a lifestyle change is challenging and can present many barriers. Don't let these barriers interfere with your success. Recognize that barriers are common and plan for ways to work around these obstacles.

- Special Occasions
- Thoughts and Emotions
- Limited Resources
- Limited Support from Others
- Limited Time
- Medical Conditions

“Living alone was a challenge. It was hard trying to eat healthy on a limited income. It was also hard sometimes to prepare food with my Parkinson's.

I really had to depend on myself and my 'adopted family' in MOVE! to get through.”

– Joseph, lost 180 pounds

Steps to Problem Solving

1. Clearly describe your problem. What is the challenge you are facing?
2. Come up with options. What are some ways to solve your problem?
3. Pick the best options. Which of those options would work best to solve your problem?
4. Make an action plan. How will you put those choices into practice?
5. Try it. How did it go?

Weight Plateaus

Plateaus are a part of losing weight for everyone, returning to the behaviors that helped you be successful in the first place we help you overcome a plateau.

- Record calories accurately
- Meet activity goals daily

If it doesn't challenge you, it won't change you.

Module To-Do:

1. Set two new weekly SMART goals in your Module Check-Out.
2. Record in your *Food and Activity Log* every day.
3. Consider the ways you can use the steps to problem solving to address some of your weight-loss barriers.
4. Review Module 9 in preparation for your next meeting.