



Module 11: Managing Behavior Cues

Participant Guide



Session Focus



Behavior cues are things in your life like sights, smells, sounds, feelings, people, places, activities, or situations that you react to in a certain way—without even thinking about it. Identifying and changing behaviors associated with these cues can help prevent or delay type 2 diabetes.

In this session, we will talk about:

- What a behavior cue is and how we create and re-create patterns connected to getting groceries, eating, and inactivity
- Common cues for getting groceries, eating, and inactivity and ways to change unhealthy patterns associated with them
- Your own cues that lead to overeating or less healthy choices
- How emotions and cues lead to your food choices and eating patterns

You will also make a new action plan!

Tips:

- ✓ Instead of buying treats for your loved ones, show your love in a healthy way.
- ✓ Try not to snack when you watch TV. Avoid eating out of large containers and bags. Get yourself a single serving.
- ✓ Reduce the time you spend sitting. Get up and move around during TV commercials or every 15 minutes, walk up a flight of stairs, or walk around the house every 30 minutes or so.

About Behavior Cues

Martha's Story—Part 1

Martha just learned that she's at risk for type 2 diabetes. She knows that taking small steps to change her eating patterns and adding more movement to her day can make a big difference in reducing her risk.

On a typical workday, Martha gets up at 5:30 in the morning. As soon as she enters the kitchen, she starts making coffee. Just the smell helps her wake up. Then she warms up a pastry to dunk in her coffee.

By 3 in the afternoon, she's getting drowsy again. So, she stops at the coffee machine in the staff lounge. Her friend Adam is usually in the lounge at that time too, so she spends a few minutes chatting with him. At the vending machine, she buys herself another pastry to dunk in her coffee.

Later that evening, Martha needs to unwind after a stressful day. So, she gets comfortable on the couch with her partner and watches TV. During one of the commercial breaks, she grabs a bag of chips and a couple of sodas. Spending time with her partner, laughing together, and sharing snacks is one of Martha's favorite parts of her day. Sometimes, she's so tired that she falls asleep in front of the TV, making it even harder to get up the next morning.



About Behavior Cues

Patterns that Martha has Created in Her Day

Time	Place	Who's Around	What's Positive?	What Needs to Change?	What Martha Might Do
5:30 a.m.	Martha's kitchen	Alone	Having a cup of coffee to wake up Having time to herself before she starts the day	Highly processed pastry (300 calories)	
3:00 p.m.	Staff lounge	Adam	Leaving her desk Going for a walk to the lounge Talking to her friend Adam Getting a snack	Highly processed pastry (300 calories)	
Evening	Martha's living room	Her partner	Relaxing Enjoying time with her partner Getting up during the show	Highly processed snacks and drinks (500 calories) Falling asleep in front of the TV	

About Behavior Cues

Martha's Story—Part 2

Martha takes action to manage her cues to help her engage in healthier behaviors. For example, instead of falling asleep in front of the TV, she is going to bed at a regular time each night, so she has more energy when she wakes up. She still loves the taste and smell of her morning coffee, as well as having some time to collect her thoughts before she starts her day. But instead of having a highly processed pastry for breakfast, she has some quick oats with a teaspoon of maple syrup, some fresh blueberries, and a few walnuts.

Martha still likes seeing her friend Adam in the staff lounge. They've started taking a 10-minute walk around the block when the weather is nice.

That way, they can get out of the office at least once a day, and they can also share funny stories. Martha also stopped going to the vending machine at work. Instead, she brings cut veggies and dip, a small piece of fruit, or cheese and crackers for her afternoon snack.

Martha still watches TV to unwind after a stressful day, and she really enjoys this time with her partner. But before they sit down for TV, they have started going out and taking a 20- to 30-minute walk, or when the weather is bad, they lift weights after dinner. Now that she has been doing this for a few weeks, they look forward to this time talking about their day and laughing together. Martha also has 3 cups of popcorn and herbal tea with honey for her evening snack instead of chips.

Martha was able to keep the healthy parts of her patterns while making small changes. As she continues to practice those small changes, they will begin to feel more and more comfortable to her.



Common Behavior Cues

Getting Groceries, Eating, and Inactivity Cues

Common grocery shopping cues:

“When buying groceries, I see candy at the checkout counter and put some in my shopping cart.”

“When I receive store emails with coupons and sales, I prefer getting more food for a lower cost. I eat and buy whatever I can afford.”



Common eating cues:

“When we go out to the movies, we always get a big tub of popcorn to share, plus some soda.”

“I can’t walk by a fundraiser food sale, without stopping and buying some.”

“When my kids hear the ice cream truck, I buy us ice cream.”

“My family gets a pizza every Friday night.”

“I always have something sweet after dinner.”

“My friends and I always have chicken wings, soda, and chips while we watch the big game.”

“On Sundays, my women’s group has coffee and donuts.”

Common inactivity cues:

“My friends and I sit together in the cafeteria every day during lunch.”

“I always play video games after work.”

“My family plays board games all Saturday afternoon.”

“When dinner is over, it’s time for TV.”





Changing Behaviors for Getting Groceries, Eating, and Inactivity Cues

Directions: Work with your group to identify other cues associated with getting groceries, eating, and inactivity. Record additional behavior cues in the left column under “Add Your Own.” Then, brainstorm ideas for ways to form new behaviors for each cue. Record your ideas in the “Ways to Form New Behaviors” column.

Grocery Shopping Cues	Ways To Form New Behaviors
It's on sale, or I have a coupon for it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Find ways to save money on healthy items instead.</i>
It looks tempting.	
I always get this.	
Add Your Own: <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
Add Your Own: <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

Common Behavior Cues

Eating Cues	Ways To Form New Behaviors
I like to nibble on chips or pretzels while I watch TV.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Avoid eating out of large containers and bags. Get yourself a single serving.</i>
I see the drive-through on my way home from work and stop.	
I'm enjoying this time with my friends or family—I deserve this!	
I'm really hungry, and it's easier to open a package than to prepare a dish.	
This looks or smells tempting.	
I don't want to waste food.	
I see TV commercials or social media ads of tempting foods.	
Add Your Own: <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
Add Your Own: <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

Common Behavior Cues

Inactivity Cues	Ways To Form New Behaviors
Watching TV or sporting events	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Be active during commercials or during breaks.</i>
Talking on the phone	
Playing video games on the computer	
Hanging out with friends and family	
Waiting in the car for kids to finish school/practice	
Looking at my smartphone, apps, or social media	
Add Your Own: <hr/>	
Add Your Own: <hr/>	

My Behavior Cues

Directions: Below are examples of patterns to change, cues associated with those patterns, and ways to change those patterns. In the space provided, complete the table as it applies to you. What patterns in your life do you want to change? What cues those patterns? Finally, think about what you can do instead to avoid repeating the same patterns.



Pattern I Want To Change	Cue	What To Do Instead
<p>I always put candy bars in my cart when I finish shopping!</p> <p>I do such a great job until I get to the checkout lane.</p>	<p>Stores put sweet and salty foods at the checkout on purpose! They know you're tired of making decisions, and it's easy to let a few candy bars, chips, or sodas fall into your cart. If you're shopping with children, they can also beg for these items.</p>	<p>You can't avoid checking out at the grocery store, so make a plan before you get to the checkout lane. Pick out something healthy as a treat. If you have kids, have them pick out a fruit, special low sugar fizzy water drink, or healthy snack before you reach the candy bars. Plan ahead.</p>
<p>I am always starving right before dinner. As I am cooking a healthy dinner, I find myself snacking on chips. The other day, I ate the whole bag as I was making grilled chicken and broccoli.</p>	<p>It's normal to be hungry before dinner. Many people are cooking dinner after a long day, and we like to reward ourselves. Also, hunger can often be mistaken for thirst, especially as we age.</p>	<p>Plan a healthy snack to avoid hunger pangs while you're cooking.</p> <p>Find a new reward. Even 5 to 10 minutes of quiet time to yourself can feel like a big reward after a long day.</p> <p>Drink water with a splash of fruit juice to rehydrate.</p>

My Behavior Cues

Pattern I Want To Change	Cue	What To Do Instead
<p>When I visit my family, we sit in the kitchen and talk and eat all day long. I always overeat when I'm there.</p>	<p>Family gatherings pose many challenges, such as dealing with family dynamics and eating certain foods and dishes that bring back memories and feelings.</p>	<p>Make a plan. Share it with your family and loved ones.</p> <p>Try to avoid eating between meals, but do enjoy eating with family.</p> <p>Bring or make a veggie tray for low-calorie snacking and to add vitamins, minerals, and fiber to keep you healthy.</p> <p>Plan a family walk or other activity that involves movement.</p>
<p>Add Your Own:</p> <hr/>		
<p>Add Your Own:</p> <hr/>		
<p>Add Your Own:</p> <hr/>		

Emotions and Cues Lead to Choices

Directions: Here are some common cues and feelings that often lead to unhealthy food choices. Take some time to think about an eating habit or choice you want to change, why you would want to make this change, and what you are going to do to change it.

Physical or Mental Cue	Eating Habit/ Choice I Want to Change	Why I Want To Change It	What I'm Going To Do
<i>Example: I feel tired.</i>	<i>When I have to stay awake and I'm tired, eating helps me stay awake.</i>	<i>I eat late at night when I'm not really hungry, and the calories add up.</i>	<i>I am trying to go to bed earlier, but I can drink a glass of water or chew sugar-free gum when I have to stay up late to finish my work.</i>
I feel tired.			
I feel stressed.			
I feel angry.			
Add Your Own: _____	_____ _____	_____ _____	_____ _____

Emotions and Cues Lead to Choices

Physical or Mental Cue	Eating Habit/ Choice I Want to Change	Why I Want To Change It	What I'm Going To Do
I feel nervous.			
I feel happy.			
I feel bored.			
I feel lonely.			