



A Discussion Guide for Living Well With Diabetes

*New
Beginnings*

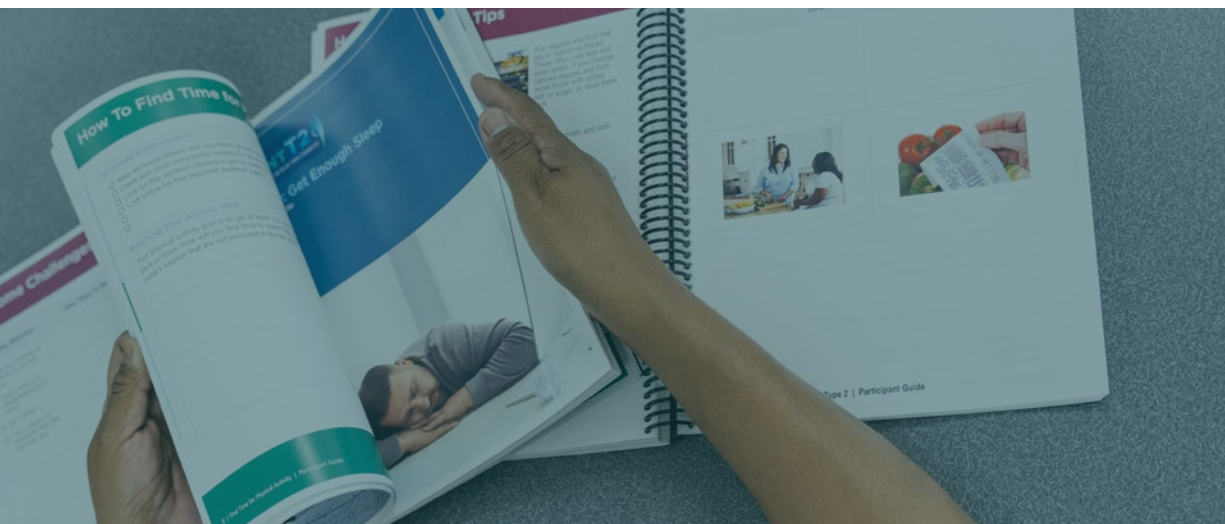




Table of Contents



MODULES

Living Well with Diabetes.....	6
Diabetes and Heart Disease.....	12
Understanding Your Feelings	18
Taking Care of Yourself	25
Managing Stress	33
Solving Problems and Planning for the Unexpected	40
Talking to Your Health Care Team	46

WORKSHEETS

Building Social Connections in Family and Community Circles	51
Commit to Quit: Stopping Smoking	56
Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support Services	60
Facilitating New Beginnings Online	64
Preventing Type 2 Diabetes.....	67
Spirituality as a Guide and Support	70
Understanding Health Information	73

CONNECTING THREADS

Be Your Own Best Friend Worksheet.....	77
Healthy Coping Strategies Worksheet.....	79
Making a Plan Worksheet.....	80
Problem Solving Plan Worksheet.....	81
Team Roster Worksheet.....	83
5 Questions to Ask Your Health Care Team.....	85
How to Help a Loved One With Diabetes When You Live Far Apart	87
Steps to Help You Stay Health With Diabetes.....	93

About this guide

New Beginnings: A Discussion Guide for Living Well With Diabetes is a tool to help people with diabetes and their family members take positive action to manage the disease. *New Beginnings* uses stories, activities, and facilitated discussion to address the emotional impact of diabetes. It focuses on helping people with diabetes and their families manage diabetes and build positive, supportive relationships. *New Beginnings* is tailored to the needs of American Indian or Alaska Native persons in collaboration with community members from Tribal Nations across the United States, including diabetes educators who serve Tribal communities. This guide is intended to:

- Help group leaders facilitate discussions about the emotional side of living with diabetes.
- Help people with diabetes to identify family and social support needs and develop goal setting, positive coping, and problem-solving skills.

About 38.4 million adults in the United States have diabetes, a chronic (long-lasting) disease that affects how your body turns food into energy. Diabetes is a major cause of heart disease and stroke and the leading cause of kidney failure, nontraumatic lower limb amputations, and new cases of blindness among adults. The good news is that people with diabetes can lower their risk of these complications by managing their blood sugar, blood pressure, and blood lipids (cholesterol). They can also get preventive care for their eyes, ears, feet, teeth, and kidneys. Diabetes self-management education and support (DSMES) services can help people living with diabetes manage their condition and prevent or delay health problems associated with diabetes.

Diabetes self-management education and support (DSMES) services provided by a diabetes care and education specialist (DCES) play an important role in helping people with diabetes to lower their risk of complications and improve their quality of life. In addition to teaching self-care behaviors such as healthy eating, physical activity, blood glucose monitoring, and taking medicines properly, DSMES services include goal setting, lowering risks of diabetes-related complications, problem solving, and developing strategies to improve emotional well-being. *New Beginnings* is not a required component of delivering DSMES services but can be used to supplement DSMES services as well as in diabetes support groups.

How to use this guide?

The discussion guide has seven modules with tools and questions for leading small group discussions with people who have diabetes and their family members. Topics include:

- The emotional side of managing diabetes.
- Family support.
- Goal setting, stress management, and problem solving.

Who can use this guide?

New Beginnings can be used with **faith-based, community-based, worksite**, and other diabetes support groups, whether in-person or online. Discussion leaders can be diabetes care and education specialists (DCEs), health educators, community health workers, peer counselors, or anyone with experience leading support groups.

New Beginnings discussions do not focus on giving medical advice, but it may be helpful to have a DCE or other health care professional serve as an advisor and participate in some sessions to provide more information.

What is the ideal setting for a *New Beginnings* discussion group?

New Beginnings discussions can take place anywhere that provides privacy for the group, comfortable seating for all participants, and equipment to play the videos or audio, such as a computer and projector or a mobile device.

Discussions are designed for groups of up to 10 people, but they can also be adapted for use with very large groups or a panel discussion.

Building trust and maintaining privacy

New Beginnings discussions ask participants to think and talk with each other about their feelings about diabetes and their experiences managing the disease, both good and challenging. This kind of sharing can sometimes make people feel uncomfortable. A *New Beginnings* discussion group should be a safe place where participants have social and community support to express their feelings and know that they will not be judged by others. They should feel reassured, knowing that what they share will not leave the group.

Before beginning this first session (or as needed), it is recommended that you talk about setting “ground rules” for the group. Ask the group to develop ground rules everyone can agree on. Ground rules can cover the following topics:

- **Sharing information.** Everyone should have a chance to talk if they want but should not be pressured to do so. Participants should not judge or criticize other members.
- **Advice.** People should not give advice to others unless they have been asked for it.
- **Respect.** Everyone has a right to share their opinion or beliefs with the group. People can agree to disagree without being disrespectful.
- **Privacy.** Participants should not talk outside of the group about what is shared by other participants. Participants should only contact other members outside of class if they have their permission to do so.
- **Other issues.** Groups can also set rules about taking calls and texting during the sessions, bringing children, or bringing healthy snacks. Ask the group if they have other rules to add. Write or post the ground rules in the room where everyone can see them.
- Remind group members about the ground rules at the beginning of each session.

Additionally, the diversity of Tribal Nations represented among communities will vary; however, some Native people may feel more comfortable sharing by speaking in their tribal language. The facilitator is encouraged to work with individual groups about how to appropriately navigate multi-lingual spaces and discuss with the group their preferences.

How can I use this guide?

Each module can stand alone, or modules may be used together as part of a series. Choose the activities and stories that will work best for your group and use them in any order.

In addition to the modules, *New Beginnings* includes seven “Connecting Threads.” These group facilitator resources include information on topics that can be shared in the *New Beginnings* sessions, depending on the needs of your participants.

Facilitating *New Beginnings* Online

When faced with a situation where you may be unable to bring your group together in-person or you want to further your program reach, facilitating *New Beginnings* online is a great way to provide support to your participants at home.

Even if you cannot meet in person, you can still create a supportive and inclusive environment that empowers your participants to live well and feel well with diabetes. See the Connecting Thread: Facilitating *New Beginnings* Online for more information.

Audience Considerations

Western colonization and forced assimilation of Native people resulted in historical trauma, loss of language, geographic isolation, poverty, loss of cultural and foodway traditions, and lack of access to resources that continue to directly affect the health and well-being of these communities. This forced assimilation to Western culture and ways of life, including nutrient-poor food commodities, led to an increase in health issues and the rate of diseases such as diabetes.

This curriculum was designed with input, writing, and graphics from Native people which can help ease some participant questions or concerns. Whenever it is possible, have the leader of the group discussions come from the community. Allow people to share their lived experience including when they have experienced trauma or Western pressures.

Acknowledgements

- Expert panelists who contributed to *New Beginnings*
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- Agency MABU
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Diabetes Translation, Native Diabetes Wellness Program

Module 1 Introduction

Living Well with Diabetes

Note: Facilitators are encouraged to personalize their introductions.

Group Leader
Instructions:

Talking Points & Discussion Questions



Hello. My name is _____, and I'd like to welcome you all here today for our first group discussion. Today we are going to talk about how diabetes affects people and their families.

First let's begin with talking about what *New Beginnings* is and then we will all introduce ourselves.

The goal of our *New Beginnings* group discussions is to take care of ourselves as we learn more about managing diabetes. Most of you are here because you want to get even better at managing diabetes. And you may be looking for ways to find more help and support from friends, family, and other people in your life.

You've all already taken an important step by being here today. Diabetes can be much easier to manage with the right support in place.



Now, are you all ready to get to know each other? Let's go around the room and do introductions. In your introduction, please say your name. Then please share with us why you decided to join us today. Or you can share with us what you would like to get from our sessions.



Thank you for sharing, everyone. I am glad that you are all here to share your stories and to learn more about managing diabetes.

You are not alone in your experiences with diabetes. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there are 38 million people in the United States with diabetes. Among Native people, 14.5 percent of adults have diagnosed diabetes—that's 1 in 6 people. [facilitator can add Tribe-specific information if appropriate]. Many people have learned how to take steps to manage their diabetes, and we will work together so we can too.

Over the next few sessions, we will share some tools that can help you to manage diabetes, delay or prevent complications, and live healthier lives.

You are all important members of our community, and the goal is that everyone here will feel empowered to manage their diabetes. We will work together to help each other to make progress, with help from your loved ones, health care providers, and the community.



Before we start any discussions, it is important for us to establish some ground rules for the group so that our time together is valued by everyone who attends. The goal of this group agreement is to provide us all with a safe and healing space so that we can feel free to express ourselves and offer support to each other. Here are a few to get us started:

- **Listen with care and without judgement.** Everyone should feel comfortable enough to share with the group—but should not be pressured to do so if they do not want to—and not be judged.
- **Show consideration before giving advice.** Please do not give advice to others unless they have asked for it or if you get permission to give them advice.

- **Respect.** We must respect each other, even when we disagree.
- **Honor privacy.** Please respect the privacy of every person who joins in at all times. Anything discussed in this room should not be shared outside of this room.



Ask:

Are there any ground rules that you would like to add? [*Discuss any ideas and add as needed*].



Say:

Okay, great! We can always add more rules later if we feel they are needed. We want to make sure we are prioritizing each other's safety when holding these discussions.



Ask:

Are there any questions at this point? [*answer questions*] Okay, let's get started.



Say:

Let's think for a few minutes about what it is like to overcome challenges. All of us have faced things throughout our personal lives that were tough for us, where we had to overcome challenges. These are times when we can find our inner strength and resilience—and strength from family and friends—to help us take small steps toward meeting these challenges.

Even if everything in your life isn't perfect, I know all of you have dealt with tough challenges and made progress that you can be proud of. Now let's discuss our experiences in this activity called story sharing.



Do:

ACTIVITY: Story Sharing: [*Facilitators may adapt the name and activity to be more community-specific*]

First, please pair up with another person; if you can't find one partner, then you may pair up with me [*pause to allow time for pairing*]. Now, let's take a couple of minutes to think and reflect on a time, maybe recently, when you took steps to overcome a personal challenge that came up in your life. To deal with this challenge, think about your "why" that helped you make small, doable changes. Also think of how people in your life may have helped you with this challenge.

Now, share your story with your partner and discuss what steps you took to overcome this challenge that you want to share with everyone. After you and your partner have shared your stories with each other, then get ready to share your partner's story of progress with the whole group.



Ask:

Which pair is ready to share with the group their story about steps they took to overcome a challenge? If you had any support from others on your journey, please share that as well. Thank you for volunteering.

And who else is ready to share? Everyone will have a chance.

Ask each pair to share their story of progress to address challenges and how loved ones helped them along the way. It may be most effective to have the partner share about the other person—stories tend to be more concise when told by another person. However, partners should get permission from the other person to share their story in front of the group as what was shared may be personal and the person may not want it shared to the whole group. Continue around the room.

**Say:**

Thank you all for sharing. Remembering the steps we took to overcome large or small challenges, and how other people supported us, can help us when we are taking steps toward our diabetes management goals—it can also help us to address our frustrations along the way.

**Ask:**

And you know the interesting thing about the progress you mentioned, like [*name one or two big ways you made progress*]? All of these happened because of small steps and small bits of progress. Did you notice that?

For example, [*name of person*], you mentioned [*progress*]. What were a few of the small steps you had to take to achieve that progress?

**Say:**

Now, let's shift our focus to managing diabetes and its importance in helping us to live longer, healthier lives with our families and communities.

We know diabetes is a serious disease that has complications like heart disease, kidney failure, amputations, blindness, impotence, and other health conditions. Diabetes is a leading cause of death in the United States. What disease—that's also a leading cause of death—is linked to diabetes? I mentioned it already, it is heart disease. Heart disease is a concern because people with diabetes die of heart disease more than any other cause.

Remember that you can work to prevent or delay diabetes complications, like heart disease, and live a healthy life when you learn the steps, take action, and seek help from others. Managing diabetes can help you to feel healthier, have more energy, and also have less pain, anxiety, or stress. Managing diabetes can also mean possibly taking fewer trips to the hospital or emergency room for serious health issues. Today, you showed up to this group and that's a great first step to learning about how to manage diabetes. Great job!

**Say:**

Let's look at this handout: Steps to Help You Stay Healthy With Diabetes. It outlines four steps that people with diabetes can take to make progress in managing their condition. Now let's listen to Amber's story as we review the steps.

**Listen:**

Amber's Story C

**Ask:**

What is Step 1? What are some things that Amber did to take this step?

- Why do you think learning about diabetes is important?
- How do you think learning will help you? Where do you think you might make small progress this week with managing your diabetes?

Consider writing participant ideas for things they could do this week on a flipchart. Then people can "borrow" good ideas for the week ahead if they wish. Also tell participants that being part of the group can be counted as Step 1.

**Ask:**

What is Step 2? The ABCs are A1C, which is a measure of your blood sugar over the last 3 months, Blood pressure, Cholesterol, and Stopping use of commercial tobacco. Commercial tobacco is different than traditional tobacco: commercial tobacco products are addictive, and they contain chemicals that cause cancer. Module 2 explores the ABCs more.

Managing your ABCs can help lower your chances of having a heart attack or stroke.



What is Step 3?

- What actions did Amber take to manage her diabetes?
- What do you think made it easier for her to make progress? What made it harder?

We will spend time over the next few weeks talking about small steps we can take to manage diabetes and make progress toward living a healthier life. We will also talk about how our loved ones can help to support us in making progress. In the meantime, think about one small step you could take this week?



What is Step 4?

- Do you remember anything Amber mentioned about getting routine health care or talking to a healthcare provider?

During these sessions, we'll talk about how to make the most of your visits with your health care providers.

- Is there anything you should do this week to move forward with the health care you need?



Great! We've collected a bunch of ideas here. Are there any of these that you had difficulty doing? Which of these ideas are most important to you? Which tasks are you ready to work on?

Take the number one idea on your list and make a plan:

- What action will you take?
- When will you do it? How many times a week will you do it?
- Where will you do it?
- What small steps will help you make it happen?
- What will you do to get help from family, friends, or others?
- How will you take note of your progress?
- How will you celebrate completing your plan in a healthy way?



Now you have a plan. Please follow your plan this week. Next week, we will revisit our plans and check if we can count it among your completed steps to making progress. If the plan is not complete, then we will make changes to our plan that will help us work toward making progress.

During this week, please also note any steps and progress you're making with managing diabetes. And next week [or until the next session], we will celebrate our progress and talk about steps we can take to address any challenges.

Creating or Improving Your Support Circle



Now that we've discussed that support from others is critical for making progress, let's listen to a story that discusses diabetes in families and supporting one another.



Listen to the testimonial: Nancy and Janae's Story A



When the video is over, let participants comment when they appear ready to discuss.

Let's take a few minutes to talk about what we just heard.

- What are the impacts of diabetes on their family?
- How did they talk about support in their story?
- What roles do your family and friends play right now in supporting your diabetes management? Will a volunteer please share an example of support that you have received from family or friends?



Do:

ACTIVITY: I'd like each of you to take a piece of paper and think for a moment. Who are the people in your support circle right now?

Then, write down their names or initials.

Now talk for a moment with your partner from the earlier activity to answer the question: What types of support do you get from your circle now to help you manage your diabetes, and what support do you think you need?



Say:

Let's look at this handout: How to Help a Loved One With Diabetes When You Live Far Apart. Just as there are four steps that a person with diabetes can take to make progress in managing their condition, there are four steps that loved ones can also take to help.



Ask:

- What is the first step?
 - o What are some examples of this from the story?
 - o Why is it important for loved ones to learn about diabetes?
- What is the second step?
 - o Did you notice any examples of this in the story?
- What is the third step?
 - o Why do you think might be hard for a person with diabetes to talk with their loved ones about what support they need?
- What is the fourth step?
 - o What are some things that family members in the story did to help?
- Other questions:
 - o What support does your circle provide you now to help you manage your diabetes?
 - o What additional support do you think they can provide? How can your support circle help you take some of the small steps toward making progress that that we talked about earlier?
 - o Who in your support circle can you talk with this week?
 - o What support will you ask for or be willing to accept from others this week?



Say:

On the handout, you'll see a place where you can list ways that loved ones can help you. This week, think about who else might be in your support circle and how they can help—especially with taking small steps to make progress toward managing diabetes as we discussed today.

Close the Session

- Ask if there are any questions or issues they would like addressed.
- Thank the group for their participation. [*Depending on your region, local customs, and traditions, it may be appropriate to ask an Elder to offer a prayer or song and/or burn cedar, sage, or sweetgrass to cleanse any negative energy from the area.*]
- Explain the at-home activity, if applicable.
- Remind participants about the next session.
- Ask participants to complete the session evaluation.

At-Home Activity

- Ask participants to review the Steps to Help You Stay Healthy With Diabetes handout, complete the care schedule worksheet, and take at least one small step this week. Next week, participants can then report back on their progress or get help with troubleshooting.
- OR, ask participants to review the How to Help a Loved One With Diabetes When You Live Far Apart handout, and make a list of their support circle of family, friends, or other loved ones who could offer some of the types of support suggested in the handout.

Resources

Use these resources to learn more about available support for managing diabetes.


- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):
 - [Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support \(DSMES\) Services](#)
 - [Living with Diabetes](#)
- Association of Diabetes Care & Education Specialists (ADCES)
 - [Resources for People Living with Diabetes](#)


Diabetes and Heart Disease


Overview: Today we will focus on the ABCs of diabetes. We'll talk about what the ABCs are and how they link to heart disease and stroke. We'll also discuss how you can learn about your numbers and manage your ABCs to lower your chances of having a heart attack or stroke.


Group Leader
Instructions:

Talking Points & Discussion Questions

 **Say:** Did you know that heart disease often comes along with diabetes? Let's talk about how we can take action to prevent, reduce, or delay these complications.


 **Ask:** What do you know about the relationship between diabetes and heart disease?

 **Listen:** LISTEN: Allow time for response and interaction.


 **Say:** Adults who have diabetes have an increased risk of complications like heart disease, heart attack, and stroke compared to people who do not have diabetes. These are just a few of the complications related to diabetes and they can develop over time, as high blood sugar can damage the nerves and blood vessels in our body. Nerves play an important role in the movement of our body and how we feel the world around us. Our blood vessels are like abundant rivers within our body that are powered by our hearts.


There are other risk factors for heart disease that people with diabetes may have, which include: high blood pressure, high cholesterol, higher body weight, and a family history of heart disease. Smoking commercial tobacco significantly increases the risk of heart disease in people with diabetes. By learning our risk factors, we can focus on the ones that will most help us lower our personal risks.

In our first session, we wrote down the names of some people in our support circle who can help us make progress with managing diabetes. Our support circle may include partners, relatives, close friends, and loved ones. Think about your list of those people who support you—and now add on the people in your life who rely on you for love and support.

 **Ask:** Within our communities, it is common for our children and grandchildren to depend on us. Even though we understand that we will not be around to support them forever, we know that we have a responsibility to do what we can to keep ourselves healthy so we can continue to enjoy our time with them. What are some activities that you enjoy doing with the people who depend on you?

How do your loved ones help to motivate you and increase your wellbeing?

 **Say:** As we mentioned in the first session, heart disease is important to discuss because people with diabetes die of heart disease more than any other cause. However, remember that heart disease can be prevented or delayed, and it is treatable.

 **Say:** You have all taken an important step by joining us to learn more about how to manage diabetes, reach your goals—and to delay, reduce, or prevent complications like heart disease, heart attack, and stroke.

Next, we will talk more about steps we can take to help us to live longer, so we can spend more time with our loved ones.

The ABC's of Diabetes



Do:

Give each participant a copy of the handout, Steps to Help You Stay Healthy With Diabetes.



Ask:

Let's all look at this handout together. What are the ABCs of diabetes?



Listen:

Allow time for response and interaction.



Say:

The ABCs of diabetes is a memory tool that can help each of us track and manage important health measurements. The ABCs are A1C, which is a measure of your blood sugar over the last 3 months; Blood pressure; Cholesterol; and Stopping smoking. Learning about your numbers and managing your ABCs can lower your chances of having a heart attack or stroke.

- **A is for A1C.** The A1C blood test measures your average blood sugar over the past 3 months. It is different from the blood sugar checks you might do each day. The goal for many people with diabetes is an A1C that is below 7.0%—but ask your diabetes care team what your personal A1C goal is. A diabetes care team includes health care professionals who are specialists from different fields. Together, they help you manage diabetes and delay or prevent complications.
- **B is for Blood Pressure.** High blood pressure makes your heart work too hard. The blood pressure goal for most people with diabetes is below 140/90. Your diabetes care team can help you to set a blood pressure goal that works best for you.
- **C is for Cholesterol.** When cholesterol levels in the blood are too high, blood vessels can fill up with a sticky substance, called plaque, that can build up on the walls of your blood vessels. This plaque buildup makes it harder for blood to pass through, which increases your risk of heart disease. Ask your diabetes care team what your cholesterol number should be. If you are older than 40, your diabetes care team may prescribe a medicine, called a statin, that lowers cholesterol for heart health.

The “s” in ABCs is for stopping commercial tobacco use. Commercial tobacco is different from traditional tobacco.

Commercial Tobacco	Traditional Tobacco
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes: cigarettes, cigars, e-cigarettes, vapes, chew, and more. • Products are manufactured and sold by big companies. • Highly addictive. • Contains additives and chemicals that cause cancer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A natural plant. • Has no additives. • May be used for ceremonies. • May be used for prayers. • Is honored with respect.



Continuing to smoke and use commercial tobacco products puts people with diabetes at even higher risk of heart disease, heart attack, stroke, and other health conditions. Stopping the use of commercial tobacco lowers your risk for these health conditions. Not using commercial tobacco protects you and your loved ones from diseases caused by commercial tobacco.



- Have you ever talked with your diabetes care team about your ABCs—A1C, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels? If you smoke or use commercial tobacco, have you talked with your diabetes care team about stopping commercial tobacco use?
- Do you already have personal goals for your ABCs?
- Do you know what your most recent ABCs numbers are—and how they compare to your personal goals?



Allow time for response and interaction.



The ABC goals that we talked about apply to most people with diabetes, but they are not the same for everyone. If you have talked with your diabetes care team and you know what your ABC goals are, please write them down on the tracking form included in the handout.

If you do not have specific goals yet, take this form with you on your next visit with your diabetes care team. During your visit, discuss your ABCs goals and write them down together. Plan to discuss your ABCs at each future visit with your diabetes care team. Talk about how you are doing and write down your new ABC numbers during your visit to help you keep track and stay up to date.

Managing Your ABC's



Review tips on the [Steps to Help You Stay Healthy With Diabetes](#) handout.



What actions can we take to manage our ABCs and reach our goals?

People with diabetes have various options that will help to keep their A1C, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels within healthy ranges. Here are a few of the options to try:

- Add more fruits, vegetables, beans, lean meat, and fish to your meals.
- Look for whole grains like oats, brown rice, and whole grain bread.
- Check which foods you eat that have the largest amount of salt and fat – and choose to eat less of them.
- Look for ways to be more active. Examples include walking, swimming, or dancing. If you like to walk, try walking a little faster or further, or walk up some hills. Play a little longer with your friends, kids, and grandkids.
- Be free from commercial tobacco; avoid smoking and using commercial tobacco.
- Take prescribed medicines on time, even when you are feeling well.
- Think about activities you do now that help you to lower emotional stress, like singing, dancing, or gardening and harvesting plants. Can you do more of these activities—or add new ones like deep breathing, meditation, yoga, and cultural events?

- Talk with people in your support circle about how to best get support from them in a way that works well for you both.



[Choose one or multiple stories from the website]

- **Not Our Destiny: Stories of Health**



ACTIVITY: Story Sharing: [Facilitators may adapt the name and activity to be more community-specific]

During the first session, we talked a lot about small steps we can take toward making progress to meet our diabetes management goals. I'd like you to pair up with a partner and talk about your experience with following your plan to take a step in making progress toward your goals.

Think about the small steps you took this week. If you continue those changes, will they help your A1C, cholesterol, or blood pressure? How can small changes have a big impact on our health? If you faced challenges in completing any steps this week, that's okay. Talk about any progress that you might have made even if it seems like a small step.

Now that we've looked more closely at the steps you can take to manage your ABCs, think about your everyday life and your activities—then write down one or two actions you would like to do differently to meet your diabetes management goals. We all have our own daily habits and personal challenges, so one person's action steps toward making progress will likely be different from another person's. Then share your list with your partner.

Barriers to Making Healthy Lifestyle Changes



Let's listen to Gilberto's story—he lives with diabetes, and he is working on continuing to manage his ABCs. As you listen to Gilberto's story, make a note of the healthy change he is trying to work on, and what makes it hard for him to make the change.



Gilberto's Story A



- What steps did Gilberto discuss taking to manage his ABCs?
- What makes it hard for him to take these steps?
- What strategies does he use to make it easier to take these steps?
- What strategies does Gilberto mention that might help us with making healthy changes?



Making changes to your daily habits can be really hard. Sometimes it's hard just to get started—and once you do get started, it can be hard to continue making the new change.



ACTIVITY: We are going to do another activity, so please join your partner again and look at the list of changes you would like to make to manage your ABCs.

Share with your partner what is hardest about taking the first steps for each daily habit on your list. With your partner, share some ideas about what might help you to get started and stay motivated. Preparing for and anticipating problems ahead of time can make it easier to face that problem and also to adapt when things don't go as planned.

Goal Setting



Say:

When it comes to changing our daily habits and routines, we are all different. We have our own reasons for wanting to change and we experience individual challenges along the way. But together, we are all capable of building habits that keep us as healthy as possible.

Setting a goal, making a plan, and keeping track of how we are doing can increase our chances of building habits that will improve our quality of life.

Understanding that challenges will always come up and seeking ways to address those challenges—such as using our support circles—can help us to become more resilient (quicker to recover) in our efforts to reach our goals.

Remember that you get to decide your own goals—so you can focus on making them work best for you within your current situation, and your goals can change if needed. There is no perfect roadmap, so everyone’s journey will look different. Not all changes can or should be made at the same time—and even small steps can make a big difference.



Watch:

Setting Goals to Improve Your Health (Video: about 3 minutes)



Ask:

What are some key messages from the video?



Say:

Let’s look at this handout: Making a Plan Worksheet.

- Set goals that you truly care about. What will motivate you to stay on track?
- Split your goals into small, manageable steps.
- Be willing to shift your goals as you learn more—it’s okay to try different things until you find the right path for you.

Using the handout, choose one of the actions you would like to focus on for managing your ABCs—like eating more vegetables, being active, or getting better sleep. Fill in the Making a Plan Worksheet for the action or change you have chosen.



Ask:

Who would like to share your plan with the rest of the group?

Encourage and thank each person who shares. Be careful about allowing participants to comment on the plans of others unless the person specifically asks for advice from the group. The goal is to encourage people to identify ways to solve their individual challenges. Unsolicited advice from other participants can make a person feel less empowered.

Close the Session

- Take final questions from the group.
- Thank the group for their participation.
- Explain the at-home activity, if applicable.
- Remind participants about the next session. Ask if they have specific questions or issues that they would like to discuss with the group or one-on-one.
- Ask participants to complete the session evaluation.

At-Home Activity

If you did not conduct a goal setting activity, ask participants to review the materials and then write down one of their action steps focused on making progress toward their ABCs goals. The following handouts for this session include goal setting worksheets:

- **Steps to Help You Stay Healthy With Diabetes**
- Making a Plan Worksheet

Resources

Share these resources to help participants learn more about the ABCs of diabetes, expand the discussion, or provide additional information.

Making Healthy Food Choices

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
 - **Buffet Tips for People For Diabetes**
 - **Tasty Recipes for People With Diabetes and Their Families**
- National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK)
 - **Diabetes Diet, Eating & Physical Activity**
- US Department of Agriculture (USDA)
 - **Eat Right When Money's Tight**

Physical Activity

- US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS):
 - **Move Your Way**
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
 - **Physical Activity Basics**
 - **Adding Physical Activity to Your Life**

Stopping use of Commercial Tobacco

- Indian Health Service (IHS)
 - **IHS Smoke Free**

Understanding Your Feelings

Overview: This session will focus on finding healthy ways to identify and work through the emotional effects of diabetes. This session may be emotionally challenging for participants, and you should be prepared for responses of tears, anger, or difficult conversations. The key to successfully facilitating these conversations involves listening to participants, acknowledging experiences, refraining from judgement, and validating the emotions. It is important not to jump to being overly positive or rush people through processing difficult emotions.

Group Leader
Instructions:

Talking Points & Discussion Questions

Emotional Effects of Diabetes



Experiencing emotions and having feelings is normal and something we have in common with each other. How many feelings can you name? We are complex individuals, and our feelings and emotions can also be complex. We can feel different and multiple emotions at the same time such as: joy, sorrow, fear, love, anger, or anxiety. We may feel different emotions on different days. Or we may feel two different emotions at the same time. Our emotions can give us important information. They can remind a person about something that they enjoy. They can tell us when our individual needs are not being met. They may even remind us about our bodies' needs for sleep, food, or medical care. Keep in mind that each person experiences emotions differently. It is normal for people with diseases like diabetes, heart disease, or other conditions that last a long time, to feel a range of emotions due to the demands of managing the disease. People with diabetes can feel strong emotions at different times and for many reasons related to diabetes and how it affects their lives. For example:

- A young adult who learns they have diabetes feels frustrated and confused because they thought diabetes happened to older people.
- A parent who has been attending diabetes management classes may feel excited to share what they're learning and try out the healthy living tips with their family.
- A person who just visited their doctor may feel overwhelmed by having to take medicine and monitor their blood sugar, and they wonder why this happened to them.
- A person who has been working with the doctor to better manage their blood sugars may feel proud of their accomplishment when they see noticeable progress.
- A person who has been managing diabetes for many years may experience an injury such as a sprained ankle or broken leg and feel frustrated or defeated that their mobility is now limited.
- An adult recently diagnosed with diabetes may feel resigned to developing complications of type 2 diabetes because their mother and grandmother both had it and developed complications.

**Say:**

Physical factors within our bodies that can affect our emotions include having high or low blood sugar, being very tired, or being ill. Every person here is living complex lives. Many situations in our lives can also affect our emotions. In our lives, we often experience simple, good, complicated, and difficult times in relation to our money, bills, work, home, family, friends, and communities. Sometimes, these issues can become even more overwhelming when they are combined with managing diabetes. All of our emotions are valid. We will talk more about some ways to help us experience our emotions in a healthy way as we go through this lesson.

Let's listen to one person share a story of their real experience.

**Listen:**

Nancy's Story B

**Ask:**

Let's take a minute to sit quietly and think about the feelings we are experiencing right now after hearing Nancy's story.

- If you feel comfortable sharing, what emotions did you feel?
- What was Nancy's first reaction to her diagnosis?
- What thoughts and feelings did Nancy have over time about her diabetes diagnosis?
- Can you relate to any part of Nancy's experience and feelings?

Think about what you felt like with a new diagnosis of diabetes. What emotions do you feel as you are thinking about it? Think about which ways you relate to Nancy's story. Maybe your emotions were different – if so, how were they different? Maybe when you were diagnosed, it was difficult for you to hear the news that you were a person with diabetes. Maybe you felt blamed or embarrassed about the diagnosis—or maybe you had feelings of shock, confusion, anger, worry, sadness, or fear. Your emotions may have changed over time.

Examples that participants might share include feelings of shock, inevitability, sadness, depression, grief, anxiety, fear, anger, low self-esteem, guilt, and shame. They may also discuss positive emotions such as relief at being diagnosed, acceptance, hope, or feeling good about making health improvements.

**Do:**

ACTIVITY: Story Sharing

Let's pair up with a partner and share some of the emotions you've felt since being diagnosed with diabetes. We may all be at different stages in our journey with diabetes, feel free to share a situation you're going through now or one that you have already gone through in the past. Talk about your story with your partner and take a moment to notice and approach your feelings with the care and gentleness that you would give to a loved one. Remember the activity is sharing, not offering advice. Your feelings are valid and real. It is important to take time and make an effort to feel your emotions because they are real. Doing so will also improve your emotional health.

**Say:**

Coping is how we experience our emotions when we face a challenge. We will talk about coping later on in our discussion, but the word will come up more as we talk about emotional health.



Say:

Living with diabetes comes with many new experiences and decisions for you and your family and friends. It can take time to adapt to this new life change. You can't always control what feelings and emotions you have, but you can learn to manage how you deal with your emotions and express your feelings. Finding healthy ways to deal with and experience your emotions includes noticing and becoming aware of your thoughts, feelings, and actions when an emotionally stressful or upsetting situation is happening. Working toward healthier ways to experience and deal with your emotions will strengthen you, your friends, your family, and your community.

Take a step to build up your strength by becoming healthier in mind, body, or spirit so that you stay well for what matters most to you.



Ask:

What have you done to build the strength of your mind, body or spirit? Affirm responses that lead to or reflect healthier choices and living.

Every time you make the effort to take care of yourself—when you make a healthy food choice, move your body, get enough rest, take the time to notice and be aware of your feelings. Your resilience will improve as you recognize your strengths and challenges during a variety of situations.

Addressing your emotions, and not simply ignoring them or stuffing them inside, takes practice and you will find what works best for you. Healthy habits can strengthen your ability to deal with challenges. Learning about and strengthening your emotional health is rarely easy. To begin working on your emotional health, it takes a dedicated focus. In this case, being “purpose led” means to work on your emotional health for your own reasons and with the purpose of improving your emotional health. Most of us have a lot going on in our lives, so almost everything we do has a reason or “why” behind it. After you know your “why you want to focus on your emotional health”, then it will be easier to notice and become aware, or mindful, of your feelings.



Ask:

Take a moment to think about your “why” for focusing on your emotional health.

The next step after becoming more aware of your feelings is to give your attention to each emotion you are feeling and start to think about your own personal reason why you are feeling each of those feelings. Being aware and mindful of your feelings will help you with the next step: taking care of your emotions and coping in a healthy way. Some people find that if they write down their feelings and stories it helps the person define their emotions better or work through them. It also will give the person the ability to look back and see the progress they are making.



Ask:

When you take time and make an effort to take care of yourself, including your emotional health, you are building up personal strength for challenges that come your way. Learning how to better work with difficult emotions is much like building muscles—the more you practice dealing with emotions differently, the stronger and more resilient you will become and the new ways of dealing with things will become easier. What is one thing that you could do for your emotional health that that you would like to try?

Healthy Coping Strategies



Say:

Remember, coping is how a person deals with their emotions when facing a challenge. Coping can be healthy or unhealthy.

Healthy approaches to coping allow us to deal with our emotions in ways that help us to address a situation and still take care of our own health.

Emotions are a normal part of life. Healthy coping has benefits for our health. And unhealthy approaches to coping (dealing with an emotion or facing a challenge) can cause harm to our health and it can harm people we care about. Coping in an unhealthy way can make you deny or reject how you are feeling. It can cause you to get stuck in an emotion or have you doing things that are not good for your emotional or physical health. It may take a few tries to find the coping strategy that works best for you in any situation, so do not be discouraged if the first thing you try does not work as you had hoped. Also, not everyone has the same coping mechanism as you, so just keep in mind that other people's journeys with their emotions may be different from yours as you are finding your own ways to cope with your emotions in a healthy manner. As you continue on your journey one important skill to develop is your own ability to filter others' reactions to you as a reflection of their healthy coping abilities and perspectives and not a reflection of you.



Ask:

What are some examples of unhealthy ways of coping we might use to deal with our emotions?

Examples: Drinking too much alcohol, smoking, eating unhealthy foods or eating too much, avoiding talking about health challenges that may include diabetes, or not taking prescribed medicines.



Ask:

What are some healthy ways to cope that might be helpful for Nancy?

Examples: Going to a support group, prayer, talking with family members, testing her blood glucose, or being physically active.

Healthy approaches to coping include expressing your feelings and taking care of your emotions in ways that benefit your emotional or physical health.



Ask:

What are some healthy ways to cope that can be fun for you to start with?

Examples: Talking about what you need with family or close friends, addressing the situation differently, humor, or finding a positive outlet (like physical activity or a new hobby).



Ask:

What kind of community activities or cultural practices have helped you improve your emotional health?

Examples: Bead work, sewing, singing, drumming, dancing, ceremony, sweat, weaving, time with family, etc.



Ask:

Can some ways of coping be both healthy and unhealthy? For example, humor can be a positive way to cope with a difficult situation, but humor is not helpful if it's used to avoid addressing the problem.



Ask: It is important for people with diabetes to find and use healthy coping strategies. What are some reasons that it is important? What have you seen people do that demonstrates healthy coping strategies?



Do:

ACTIVITY: Story Sharing

Thinking about the emotions that you shared earlier with your partner—let's pair up again and take turns thinking about a few healthy coping ideas that you are open to trying to help express and take care of your emotional health.

Ask one person from each pair to share ideas they came up with. Before sharing, ask each person if they want to share their stories with the group. Write the responses on flipchart paper.



Say:

As we've heard in our discussion, there are many healthy ways we can cope with feelings like sadness, anxiety, and anger.

Each person will have their own approach to coping that can help them. It is important to focus on healthy ways of coping that help us to deal with our emotions, address the situation, and take care of ourselves. Caring for our emotional health is one of many good ways to take care of our overall health and when we care for ourselves, it makes it easier for us to enjoy taking care of our loved ones and our community.

Diabetes and Depression



Say:

Let's look at these handouts:

Chronic Illness and Mental Health: Recognizing and Treating Depression.

Suicide and Crisis Prevention Fact Sheets



Ask: Did you know that people who have diabetes are twice as likely to have depression as people who do not have diabetes? Does this surprise you?



Say:

Everyone has times in their life when they feel sad. But depression is a serious condition that affects a person's quality of life—it can change their behavior, their thoughts, their motivation, and interactions with other people. Depression is a disease and there are medications and other treatments available that may help. Mental health is just as important as physical health, and both of them help us to feel healthy as we live our lives each day.

For many Native communities, the risks of depression and suicide can be up to three times higher than for the general population. Depression is a serious condition because it can make it harder for you to manage diabetes, which increases your risk of complications. Most people do not realize it, but it also goes the other way—when you are not managing your blood sugar, medicines, and other physical conditions, then this can also lead to symptoms of depression. It is important for you to know the signs and symptoms of depression and be aware if you have any of these symptoms. You can support your own mental health by talking to your health care team about how you feel—depression can be treated if you get help as soon as possible.



Signs of depression can include:

- Having ongoing sad, anxious, or empty feelings.
- Feeling hopeless.
- Feeling guilty, worthless, or helpless.
- Feeling irritable or restless.
- Loss of interest in activities or hobbies that were once enjoyable, including sex.
- Feeling tired all the time.
- Difficulty concentrating, focusing, remembering details, or making decisions.
- Difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep, a condition called insomnia, or sleeping all the time.
- Overeating or not eating enough.
- Thinking of death and suicide, suicide attempts, or self-harm.
- Ongoing aches and pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems that do not improve with treatment.



If you have signs of depression, it can be overwhelming—but know you are not alone. It is important to talk to your loved ones and your health care team so you can get help as soon as you are able—to help manage depression. Connecting with those around you: family, friends, elders, and community members, is essential to helping you work through depression and protect your mental health. The social circles around you can be a great source of strength in providing care through challenging times and circumstances.

Prioritize your mental health, in the same way that you would support a loved one who has depression. If you have feelings of hurting yourself or other people, please tell someone and get help right away.

Close the Session

- Take final questions.
- Thank the group for their participation.
- Explain the at-home activity, if applicable.
- Remind participants about the next session. Ask if they have specific questions or issues they would like addressed.
- Ask participants to do the session evaluation.

At-Home Activity

- Ask participants to complete the Healthy Coping Strategies Worksheet, AND/OR
- Encourage participants to start a journal, either written or electronically. Encourage them to write down how they are feeling at different points in the day (morning, afternoon, and night) and what helps them feel better or worse. A journal can help the participant to become more mindful and understand their feelings better, and it can also help them to consider more options for healthy coping.

Resources

Use these resources to learn more about depression, expand the discussion, or provide additional resources to participants.

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
 - [Diabetes and Mental Health](#)
 - [Ten Tips for Coping with Diabetes Distress](#)
- National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases
 - [Diabetes Distress and Depression](#)
- [National Institute of Mental Health](#)
- [MentalHealth.gov](#)
- Association of Diabetes Care & Education Specialists
 - [Healthy Coping](#)
- [988 Suicide Hotline Native American Website](#)
 - Call the Lifeline phone number: 988 anytime, 24 hours, 7 days a week (24/7)
- [StrongHearts Native Helpline](#)
 - 1-844-7NATIVE (1-844-762-8483) is a 24/7 safe, confidential and anonymous domestic and sexual violence helpline for Native Americans and Alaska Natives, offering culturally-appropriate support and advocacy
- [We R Native Mental Health](#)
- [Crisis Texting Helpline](#)
 - Text "NATIVE" to 741741 to connect with a volunteer Crisis Counselor Free 24/7 support at your fingertips

Taking Care of Yourself

Overview: This discussion focuses on overcoming self-doubt and becoming more confident in managing diabetes.

Group Leader
Instructions:

Talking Points & Discussion Questions

Taking Care of Yourself



Amber's Story A



What are some actions the character takes that help her manage her diabetes?
Why do you think she does them?



Sometimes, we can describe the way we treat ourselves or the actions we take as sacred and loving, or as destructive and sometimes hurtful to ourselves or others. There are times when we take actions that work best for ourselves, while other actions we take can make things worse for us.

Let's do a visualization activity, you are welcome to close your eyes to imagine this scenario.

Don't worry if it is not realistic because we will be pretending for a second that we live in a perfect world with no stress about money or bills. Now imagine that you were visiting your favorite sacred site, wherever that may be. You are enjoying the day and the nice weather, when a sacred being approaches you and places a sleeping baby human in front of you. The sacred being calmly gives you instructions to raise this sacred child and to never harm the child.



- How would you react to this?
- How willing would you be to care for the baby?
- How do you feel about this responsibility of taking care of a sacred baby?
- What kind of actions would you take to help or support this baby?
- What could you do to prevent harm coming to this baby?



Now, let's come back to reality. In real life, we have a lot of competing issues that we are responsible for, especially when we are always taking care of others. But remember—you are sacred too, even if you are not a baby. Think about how you would need to take care of our story's sacred baby, then apply some of those caring actions to yourself. And remember that you are not alone—and that people who are in your social circle can also help you take care of yourself.

**Ask:**

- How do you feel about having the responsibility of taking care of yourself?
- What actions do you take now to help or support yourself?
- What are some reasons that it is important to care of yourself?
- What actions have you taken that cause more problems for you? Why did you take these actions?
- What ideas do you have for steps you could take to prevent these actions from harming you again?

Sometimes, a person takes an action based on an attitude or an emotion that can lead to not believing in themselves. Now, in a good way, let's remember our sacred child but this time the baby has grown into a toddler, and they are learning new things.

**Ask:**

When a toddler is having a difficult time with something, how can we help them to start to believe in themselves and have confidence?

**Say:**

Similar to how we would encourage a toddler or child, there are many ways that a friend or relative can help and support you to manage diabetes and overcome difficulties:

- They may remind you of the progress you have made toward reaching your goals and encourage you to be proud of how far you have travelled.
 - *For instance: You may not have met your A1C goal, but you may have reduced your A1C by 1 point. You have made progress, and you can be proud of what you have done.*
- They may remind you that if you keep putting in effort, you will see the benefits of your work.
 - *For instance: Your 10-minute walk in the morning may be having a positive effect on your blood pressure. By walking every day, you will see even more benefits to maintaining your weight, managing your blood sugar, and staying healthy.*
- They may be more compassionate with you if you do not feel confident at the time.
 - *For instance: You share that you are not feeling sure of yourself regarding starting physical activity for the first time. This can open up a discussion and they may develop a better understanding of your struggle.*
- They may help you solve problems. If something didn't work, they could help you figure out why and help you try a better way. They could remind you of what has worked for you in the past. They would not blame you. They would help you find a better way.
 - *For instance: You are feeling stressed every day, doing all the things to manage diabetes and also to manage your job and family life. They could help you to look at your daily routine and figure out what things you can adjust to help you feel less stressed.*
- They would not let you give up.
 - *For instance: You are working hard to meet your weight loss goal but it is not happening as fast as you would like. They could encourage you to keep up the good work taking care of yourself, because it leads to health benefits over time.*

- o They will help you set appropriate goals. *For instance: They could help you plan for running short distances 3-4 days a week, while slowly working toward running longer distances.*
- They could help you to remember your purpose and why you are focusing on your health and well-being. They can remind you to think about what is most important to you.
 - o *For instance: They could encourage you to think of your family and friends who care about you and feel grateful to have you in their lives.*

All of the examples of how a friend or relative supports you in overcoming difficulties can also be good ways to support yourself when you encounter difficulties. These examples show patience, care, compassion, and encouragement. Many examples use strengths to help address issues—they are helpful and do not use judgement or cause harm. Choose which examples would be helpful to you, and try out ones that you are interested in. Remember—even as you are practicing caring for yourself in a positive way, it is also a strength for your friends and relatives to be involved and to help you.



Ask:

How could Amber honor herself—by caring for herself in the same way that she would take care of someone she loves?

Can you relate to this character? Why, or why not?



Do:

ACTIVITY: Story Sharing: Be Your Own Best Friend

- Hand out the Be Your Own Best Friend Worksheet.
- Ask participants to review the examples on the worksheet and fill in their own examples.
- Ask participants to pair up with another group member and discuss some ways that they can give care to themselves—in the same way they would give care to others.
- Ask one member of each pair to share key points from their discussion.



Do:

ACTIVITY: Activity variations:

- Ask participants to think about a time in their life when they experienced a challenge—and ask them to imagine what they would tell themselves if they could go back and talk to themselves in a positive way. Ask them to share their thoughts with their partner.
- Ask participants to talk about some of the ways they care for others in their life—their family, friends, or community.
- Now, ask them to consider a challenge they are currently facing in their life. How can they care for themselves in the same way they care for others now? Ask them to share their ideas with their partner.
- Ask participants to think about some of their current diabetes management goals. Are they making progress step by step? How can they use care and support for themselves to help them make progress toward their goals? Ask them to share their ideas with their partner.

- Ask participants to pair up and role-play a situation where they practice asking each other for help on a challenge the other person is going through—and they can practice how to respond as a friend who offers care and support. Discuss how they can use strengths in their approaches to challenges



Ask:

In life, there are challenges and issues that we face—like a family issue, financial problem, or a difficult boss at work. Sometimes our thoughts can give us strength to cope with an issue. And sometimes our thoughts can make the issue even harder to deal with. *For instance: A helpful thought might be, “I need to talk with someone who can relate to what I’m going through.” An unhelpful thought might be, “I’m just not going to talk to my boss anymore because I’m afraid of what he/she will say to me.”*

Do you ever have thoughts or take actions that can lead to bigger issues for yourself or your health? What was that experience like? Can you give an example of what happened? What positive thoughts or actions do you take now that could have helped you during that time?

Here are some possible examples:

- *Feeling guilty.*
- *Telling yourself that you are no good, that you can’t do anything right, that you brought this on yourself, and that you’ll never change.*
- *Worrying about everyone else—so that you don’t take care of yourself.*
- *Feeling fearful of what you have to deal with.*
- *Seeking out people who are even worse off than you are so you can feel better, but who lead you to take unhealthy actions, like drinking too much alcohol.*
- *Seeking out people who make you think that you cannot do better than you are doing now.*
- *Blaming others instead of finding solutions or support.*
- *Being angry (at yourself, at others, at how unfair life is).*



Ask:

What experiences have you had with honoring your own thoughts and actions in a healthy way, like how you would care for someone you cherish and love? Can you share some of your personal experiences?

Here are some possible examples:

- *Telling yourself you can do it or cheering yourself on.*
- *Celebrating your hard work trying to make healthy changes, including small ones.*
- *Recognizing your efforts after problem solving.*
- *Using your voice and advocating for yourself by asking for what you need—such as help with getting more physical activity, restaurant food to be prepared healthfully, or kind words and encouragement instead of criticisms from friends and relatives.*
- *Sharing your fears, instead of always trying to be the role model or the strong person for everyone else to depend on.*
- *Listening to wisdom shared by people who have experienced similar challenges and worked to address them.*

- *Reaching out to people who have good intentions and are willing or even excited to offer you support.*
- *Reminding yourself that you are sacred. You deserve to have a healthy body, a healthy life, and time just for you. You have the right to love yourself at any time, and you have the right to feel supported.*



Say:

When there are times you aren't able to follow the small steps you set for yourself, take some time—even a few seconds—to practice offering yourself care in the same way you would give care to someone you love. Remember the things you are good at and use your strengths to help you. It can be helpful to do things, like appreciating the progress you have made, as a way to stop unhealthy actions or thoughts. It can be hard to change the way you think and to break old habits when that is what you do all the time—especially if you encounter unexpected challenges. Try to take a pause, reflect on your progress, and remember why you want to make changes in your life—and when you are ready for it, plan out the next small step(s) you want to take towards your goals.

If it will help you, talk to a trusted friend or relative to get a support boost. Be kind. Think about what helpful words you would share if a toddler or child asked for help and then, speak to yourself in the same helpful and kind way. Each of us deserves kindness, even as adults. Everyone needs comfort—perhaps it can come from a phone call to a friend, a walk outdoors in nature, singing along with a fun song, or even dancing spontaneously—instead of doing something else that might get in the way of making progress toward your goals.

- Sometimes honoring yourself means allowing yourself to experience your emotions. Share your emotions that may be related to feelings of loss (of independence, of a loved one, of your health) or your fears (of possible complications of diabetes, of disability, of death). Sharing your emotions can help you feel supported as you continue your journey.

When we choose to live with more love and compassion for ourselves, we can improve our ability to:

- Use and honor our strengths and feel more confident in our progress.
- Be more resilient when it comes to addressing our struggles and taking care of daily challenges.



Do:

ACTIVITY: The goal of this activity is for participants to learn how to coach themselves with positive and comforting thoughts. The facilitator will:

- Ask participants to picture an elder visiting them to share some kindness and care:
 - The elder offers a kind helping hand, shares a comforting story, and encourages you to forgive yourself—so you can be mentally ready to continue your journey on a more positive path.
- Hand out paper, pens or pencils, and envelopes. Ask participants to address the envelopes to themselves.

- Ask participants to imagine what the elder would share with them—and ask them to write an encouraging letter to themselves. Then ask participants to seal the letter in the envelope and turn it into the discussion leader or facilitator.
- Mail the letters to participants two days after the session.

**Ask:**

For this activity, think about how an elder would guide you in a positive way to make progress on your goals. Also think about how you would encourage a child or young adult to make progress on their goals.

Now, using what you thought of, how can you help yourself to set SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timely, and trackable) goals that are realistic and achievable—so you feel grateful to your past self when you reach your goal, or make a positive step towards reaching it? What else would help you to set yourself up in a positive way to make progress toward your goals?

**Ask:**

What goal setting examples from the story made things harder for the character?

Write responses on the flipchart paper.

Examples: Set a goal that was not specific; set too many goals; set a goal that was too hard for her current knowledge or skill level; set goals based on what was important to other people instead of what was important to her.

**Ask:**

Can you think of examples where the character set herself up to make progress? OR—what do you think the character could have changed to set herself up to make progress? *Write responses on the flipchart paper.*

Examples: Set a goal that she could achieve; decided exactly what she needed to do to be successful; changed her approach if it was too hard, or changed her goal to be more realistic; set a goal that she looks forward to working on.

**Watch:**

Optional: **Setting Goals to Improve Your Health**

**Say:**

Setting goals that are customized for you means that you are:

- Setting realistic and achievable goals (see goal setting in Module 2).
- Choosing goals that are not too hard, but not too easy.
- Developing a specific plan for how you will work toward your goal. For example, *“I will take my medication every day, and take a walk once a day, so that I can see these changes in my A1C.”*
- Choosing lifestyle changes that feel right for you. Walking might work for some people—but if you would rather dance, then you should dance! It is a strength to do activities that you already enjoy.
- Appreciating your progress. Reward yourself for taking small steps toward your goal.

- Prioritizing improvements instead of getting stuck. When something goes wrong, focus on figuring out what happened. For example, try not to criticize yourself for missing a walk. Instead, think about why you missed your walk. It is normal for challenges to come up—like having too many things on your schedule for the day. Think about how you want to improve by answering questions like “How can I make sure I take my walk next time?” This will help you to find specific actions you can take to make progress.
- Always remember that tomorrow will be another day to try again. Try not to get stuck on unhelpful thoughts or actions when an unexpected challenge comes up.
- Practicing cheering for yourself like you cheer for others; you can do it!
- Taking what you have learned as you make progress and using your new experiences to make the next steps even easier.



Do:

ACTIVITY: Create Goals Customized to Fit You

The goal of this activity is for participants to build healthy habits and develop a plan to make progress on them. Ask participants to pick a goal or habit they would like to work toward and fill out the Making a Plan Worksheet.

Ask if anyone would like to share their plan with the rest of the group. Celebrate or applaud each person who shares their plan.

Be careful about allowing participants to comment on the plans of others unless the person who shared specifically asks for advice from the group. The goal is to encourage people to identify ways to solve their own problems. Unsolicited advice can make people feel less empowered. Ask the group to give themselves a round of applause for setting goals to improve their health.

Close the Session

- Take final questions.
- Thank the group for their participation.
- Explain the at-home activity, if applicable.
- Remind participants about the next session. Ask if they have specific questions or issues they would like addressed.
- Ask participants to complete the session evaluation.

At-Home Activity

- Ask participants to complete the Be Your Own Best Friend Worksheet if they did not do it during the session.
- Ask participants to do the goal-setting activity or review their goals if they did not do that during the session.

Resources

Use these resources to learn more about building self-confidence, expand the discussion, or provide additional resources to participants.

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):
 - [Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support \(DSMES\) Services](#)
- American Psychological Association:
 - [Building Your Resilience](#)
- Mayo Clinic:
 - [Build Resilience to Better Handle Diabetes](#)
- Association of Diabetes Care & Education Specialists:
 - [Healthy Coping](#)
 - [Problem Solving](#)

Managing Stress

Overview: This discussion focuses on stress, reactions to stress, and stress management.

NOTE FOR FACILITATORS: As part of this module, you will want to prepare a list of resources and tools available to support participants with managing stress. This may include local mental health resources, particularly those that are culturally informed and specific for Native people. Consider sources of support in clinical and non-clinical, community settings to offer a variety of options for your group.

It is also worth keeping in mind a trauma-informed care perspective. People who have experienced severe trauma, whether current or historical, may have a hard time opening up in a group setting. Having additional resources to recommend can help provide support for those whose needs might go beyond what this session covers or the scope of the group facilitator.

Group Leader
Instructions:

Talking Points & Discussion Questions

Stress Reactions Discussion



It is important to learn healthy ways to manage stress. Stress that is not well managed can cause health problems and make it harder to build healthy behaviors.

Stress is a normal and natural response to life events and experiences. Stress can affect our physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Even events that happen in our lives and make us feel happy—like planning a wedding or starting a new job—can be stressful as you make changes in your life. Some events can make us feel sad or upset, such as the loss of a loved one. Experiencing events such as dealing with financial problems or any of the events previously mentioned can also cause anxiety. All of these examples and their associated emotions can result in stress—and feeling overwhelmed or out of balance.

Experiencing stress can be short-term, like the stress you feel when you are going to be late. Or stress can be long-term, like the stress you feel when dealing with a difficult job or family problems. When we experience stress as children, like violence or abuse or unreliable adults, we can carry that stress with us for many years. All of this stress can add up. Even if we experience a lot of little stresses, it can become overwhelming and feel like too much—which can influence our health, our behaviors, and how we respond to daily life. Stress—whether big or small—can also affect how we take care of ourselves and our health.

The ways that a person responds to and manages stress is important. For example, sometimes a person's natural response to stress can result in making issues seem bigger, which can add more stress and is harmful to their health. Learning to make choices that help a person to cope with the situation, which helps them to take care of their health, can help to reduce stress.



I am going to read you a story.

Renee's story:

Renee stays up late watching a movie. As soon as it's over, she heads for bed knowing she will have to get up early the next morning for work.

It was late when she went to sleep. Five hours later, Renee hears her baby crying in the next room. With her eyes half shut, she checks the clock, which reads 4:38 a.m. As she crawls out of bed, she thinks how nice it would be if her partner got up to care for the baby, especially since his shift starts later in the day.

As soon as Renee gets the baby calmed down, it's time for her other two children to get up for school. She rushes to fix their breakfast, pack lunches, and get them out the door. Because the kids are running late, they miss their bus. It's 7:30 a.m., and Renee must be across town at her job by 8:00 a.m. She quickly loads the kids and baby into the car. They stop first at the babysitter, then move on to school. Renee finally pulls into work at 8:05 a.m. Her heart racing, she walks briskly to her office building. As she gets to her office, her boss meets her with a stack of reports that he needs reviewed by 10:00 a.m. She takes the box of reports and places them on top of the other stacks of paper on her desk. She thinks to herself, "Who does he think he is, handing me these reports to read at the last minute? I have other urgent projects I'm working on. Now, I'll never get out of here on time to pick up the kids." Renee sits down, closes her eyes, and puts her head in her hands.

**Ask:**

Now imagine you are Renee's coworker, and you walk by and see her head in her hands. You ask her if she is okay, and she says she is overwhelmed. She knows you juggle a lot too and wants to know what suggestions you have for her.

**Do:**

ACTIVITY: Let's get together with a partner and take turns discussing some ideas you could share with Renee.

**Ask:**

- How is Renee handling her stress?
- Can you relate to Renee? Why or why not?
- In Renee's story, what are some ways that she could
 - (1) **Think** something different (like her thoughts about her partner), or
 - (2) **Do** something different (like staying up late)?

**Say:**

Everyone responds to stress in different ways.

Stress is a natural human reaction within our body, mind or spirit as a response to challenges and threats. Stress can be caused by physical, social or psychological events. Stress may be caused by or result in emotions like anger, fear, and sadness. We may not be able to get rid of the stressor, but we can change what we tell ourselves and how we manage our emotional response. For example, some people view a stressful situation as a challenge they need to figure out how to deal with. Other people who feel stressed might experience emotions that make it hard to think clearly and move forward.

**Ask:**

Think back to your childhood. Were you ever called on in class to answer a question or do a math problem, and your mind went blank? What is going on in a situation like that?

**Say:**

When you experience stress, it is sometimes hard to deal with things that you normally handle. Stress can make it harder to think clearly and make decisions.

It can be helpful to seek social support to work through and express your emotions. Talking with someone you trust about your feelings and working through them may help you to clear your mind, refocus, and feel less stress and burden.

**Ask:**

Have you ever had the feeling of a lump in your throat, a feeling of tightness as if you were closed in, or a feeling that you couldn't think clearly because you were upset and holding in your emotions?

What did you do that helped you to relieve or lessen those feelings of stress?

Examples: Having a good cry, talking with someone, praying, singing, dancing, smudging.

**Ask:**

What are other reactions or symptoms you have that warn you that you are "stressing out" or feeling really stressed?

**Say:**

Taking time to pause and get a sense of your stress level can be a great place to start.

**Say:**

Some people experience stress as a feeling—such as anger, frustration, panic, or overwhelming sadness. Other people have a more physical reaction—such as sweating, trouble breathing, a racing heart, skin breakouts, trouble sleeping or clenched teeth. Many people can have both types of reactions—for example, overwhelming sadness that leads to crying.

**Ask:**

When a person feels too stressed and overwhelmed, what are some examples of unhealthy behaviors and reactions that people may have?

Examples:

- *Overeating or bingeing, especially on junk food.*
- *Skipping meals.*
- *Drinking alcohol or using drugs.*
- *Yelling at their children, partner, or friends.*
- *Hitting someone or something.*
- *Using distractions to avoid problems.*

**Ask:**

What are some things people can do to deal with these feelings in a healthy way?

Make sure that the discussion brings out positive actions that people can take to calm their reactions and increase their decision-making ability.

Examples might include:

- *Being physically active. Physical activity, like dancing or walking, can have a calming effect that helps you to think more clearly.*
- *Writing in a diary or journal or writing a letter to yourself to help you process the feelings you are having.*
- *Praying, smudging, or engaging in other spiritual or mindfulness activities.*
- *Talking with others one-on-one or in a support group.*

- *Giving yourself permission to cry. You may feel much better after you let those tears flow and be better prepared to address the stressful situation, which can help safeguard your health.*
- *Sharing your emotions with your family. Your family members can be important people in your life, so it is okay to rely on them to help and support you through the stressful times!*
- *Learning and practicing different ways to manage stress that might work well for you.*

Stress Management Discussion



Things that cause you stress are external events—like your baby waking up early, bad traffic, or the boss giving you a stack of assignments. These stressors do not go away when you have diabetes. In fact, you may feel like they actually multiply—as you are now checking your blood sugar, taking medications, eating healthy, being active, and managing your medical visits. And all of these stressors do not magically go away when you join a diabetes support program.

People can help manage their stress by:

- Getting help from others.
- Removing or reducing the source of stress, when possible.
- Changing how they respond to stress.
- Taking time to breathe and take a break from being overwhelmed.
- Adding more physical activity to your schedule.
- Writing in a diary or journal.
- Adding a few minutes of self-care to every day. Call a friend, meditate or pray, or take a short walk as a break.



- The challenge is to find out what is really causing your stress, and to understand the difference between the source of the stress and your reaction to it.
- A person can sometimes remove or reduce the source of stress.
- You may think that watching TV after a stressful workday or event is a stress reducer, but watching the news may have the opposite effect and cause you added stress. Instead, you can choose to take a few minutes of quiet reflection or find an uplifting story, song, or podcast to listen to instead.



For example, you might feel an emotional reaction every time you have to deal with a certain coworker. Is your coworker the source of your stress, or is it something else?

Maybe the real source of your stress is that your boss gives you more work than you can handle. This is an issue with your boss, not your coworker. The frustration you feel with your coworker is how you are reacting to the situation. The solution may come from talking with your boss; however, this does not always make the situation better.



Ask: You can't always remove the situations causing you stress. But you can change how you respond to them. For example, your boss may feel that they cannot reassign work to your coworker because you are more qualified. Since you cannot lessen your workload, what can you do to change how you respond to the situation?



Say: Consider following these steps when you start to feel emotional or when you have trouble thinking clearly:

- Stop before you say or do anything.
- Focus on your breathing. Take a few deep breaths. Say a prayer or count to five if that helps.
- Think. What would happen if you reacted in anger or chose to eat something unhealthy out of frustration? What other actions could you take that are healthier for you? Think about how your actions can affect your health and the outcome you desire.
- Choose how you will respond.



- Then act. You may now decide how to manage your reaction. Even if you decide to react with your original feelings, you have thought about your choice and are aware of the consequences. For example, you might still be angry with your coworker, but by pausing and thinking you can express your feelings more calmly and be solution-focused, which can be more productive than reacting quickly with anger.



- What are some other ways that you can change how you respond to stress?



Ask: You can also take an intentional break, which is a break that you take on purpose. Why do you think it can help you to take an intentional break? How do you feel when you need a break?

Responses: You take a break to breathe and clear your mind. When you feel like you need a break, it's usually because you're feeling uncomfortable. A break can help you to decide what to do next. It can help you take some focused time to yourself. A break can help you feel better enough to take care of the problem. A break can give you some rest and renew your energy.



Ask: How do you feel after you take a break?

Response: You can feel a range of things: better, relieved, reenergized, more focused. It can help you to try a new strategy going forward.



Say: Sometimes when you are experiencing a stressful situation, you need an intentional break. This is especially true when you have a long-term stressor like managing diabetes.

Try to plan regular breaks in your day that give you a little time for yourself, to give your mind a break from the situation.

This does not mean that the problem goes away. But if you can take some time away from the stressful situation, then you can come back to it feeling a little better which may help you be more focused or have a calmer attitude responding to the situation.

By taking an intentional break, you can clear away the power the stressor has over you. This may help you focus on problem solving and taking helpful steps to manage stress.

Some ways you might take an intentional break include enjoying a hobby, doing physical activity you enjoy, participating in a cultural activity, enjoying time with family or friends, doing community service, or writing in a journal about things that make you happy and joyful.

**Do:****ACTIVITY:** Story Sharing: Stress and Emotions

The goal of this activity is for participants to identify the situations that cause them stress, reflect on how they usually respond to stress, and develop some healthy ways to manage stress.

- Give each participant a 3 x 5-inch memo pad. Ask them to write down a brief description of at least one time when their stress caused them to have trouble thinking clearly, feel stuck, or have another strong reaction during very emotional times. Ask them to write down one positive action they want to try if an overwhelming situation happens again.
- Ask participants to pair up with another member of the group and talk about what they wrote. Ask them to discuss healthy ways they can respond to stress in the future.
- Ask one member of the pair to share their stress management tips with the rest of the group.
- Ask participants to write their names on the memo pads. Emphasize that this pad now belongs to them, and it is small enough to keep with them in a purse, or the pocket of a shirt or jacket. Tell participants they may also use the memo pad as a personal journal or diary, or to write a letter to themselves.

Participants can write down:

- Any situations in which they felt overwhelmed, found it hard to think clearly and make decisions, felt stuck, or had other stress responses.
- What they did (or were tempted to do) in that situation, such as behaving dangerously, overeating, or hiding from others
- What they plan to do to respond to strong emotions in a healthier way in the future or did at the time
- Write down three things you can do to manage the stress you experience.

**Say:**

Talk to someone you trust to help you work on reducing the stressors in your life. This could be an elder in your community, a doctor, a counselor, or other healthcare professional if you feel overwhelmed by stress, or if you have stress symptoms that do not go away after you have tried the stress management skills. Find out if your workplace has an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or a similar program—where you can talk with a counselor confidentially over the phone or in person about anything you need – it does not have to be work related.

Your doctor can help rule out any physical causes of your symptoms and refer you to specialists if more help will benefit you.

Like diabetes, it can take both lifestyle and medication to manage our emotional well-being. Your doctor can help you find out if you are experiencing stress or depression and anxiety, which can be treated with counseling, medication, or both.

Close the Session

- Take final questions.
- Thank the group for their participation.
- Provide participants information on local resources available to them or offered in the community.
- Explain the at-home activity, if applicable.
- Remind participants about the next session. Ask if they have specific questions or issues they would like addressed.
- Ask participants to do the session evaluation.

At-Home Activity

- Ask participants to do the goal-setting activity or review their goals if they did not do this during the session.

Resources

Use these resources to learn more about stress management, expand the discussion, or provide additional resources to participants.

- **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline**
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):
 - o **Diabetes and Mental Health**
 - o **Ten Tips for Coping with Diabetes Distress**
- **National Institute of Mental Health**
 - o **5 Things You Should Know About Stress**
- **Indian Health Service**
 - o **Stress and Diabetes (ihs.gov)**
 - o **Education Materials and Resources (Online Catalog) | Division of Diabetes Treatment and Prevention (DDTP) (ihs.gov)** A River Runs Through Us; 90 Day Journal for Wellness

Solving Problems and Planning for the Unexpected

Overview: This discussion will focus on problem solving and disaster preparedness for people living with diabetes.

Group Leader
Instructions:

Talking Points & Discussion Questions

Problem Solving Skills



Problems are a normal part of life. We sometimes oversleep and run late, schedules need to change, families have challenges, and people get sick.

Everyday problems that may seem small can feel more serious and stressful for a person with diabetes. Unexpected problems and changes in your daily plans can make it harder to stay on track and meet your health goals.

Sometimes it's hard to sort out everyday problems. However, developing good problem-solving skills can help you to take care of problems and stay on track.

Let's look at some skills that can help you be prepared to take care of unexpected problems in your daily life.

There are four steps to effective problem solving that you can use when you find yourself facing an unexpected issue: **Identify, Plan, Solve, and Check.**

STEP 1 – IDENTIFY: Notice when there is a problem and understand what is causing it.

Try to focus on the problem and learn what might be causing it. It sounds simple, but there can be many causes. You may need to think about your situation from all sides to really understand the main cause (or causes) of the problem you are facing.

For example, imagine that John skips breakfast because he is running late in the morning.



What might be causing this problem?

Examples: John is not sleeping well, John is going to bed late, John is depressed and has trouble getting out of bed, John might have low blood sugar that causes him to be sleepy in the morning.



Having trouble waking up in the morning can disrupt your regular schedule and make you run late and skip breakfast. Here are some different situations that may cause someone to have trouble waking up in the morning:

- Staying up too late the night before, drinking soda while watching late night television.
- Going to bed at a reasonable time but not sleeping well.
- Having a mental health issue – feeling sad, anxious, or depressed.

When you understand what is causing the problem, then you can start coming up with solutions that can help.

STEP 2 – PLAN: *Create a plan to solve the problem.*

As you create your plan to solve the problem, you may need to learn even more about the problem and reach out to others for resources to make your plan better. Each person's plan to solve their problem may be unique because problems can be complex or complicated.



Ask:

For example, John had the flu last week and he had trouble keeping food down. He didn't have much of an appetite.

- What can John do to create a plan for the next time he is sick? How should he prepare and what resources should he look for to help him? How can friends and family help?
- Do you know what to do if you get sick and cannot eat your regular meals and food?
- How do you make sure your blood sugar stays at a healthy level? And how might you need to adjust your medicine when you're sick?
- What plan can you make for when you are sick? Where could you go or who could you ask for more information?

Examples: John could ask his health care team about how he might need to adjust his medicine when he's sick. He may need reminders to continue taking his diabetes medicines, even if he can't eat. He could try to drink liquids to take the place of the fruits and breads he usually eats. He can talk to his health care team and be aware of the things he should do, and when he should go to the urgent care or emergency room. He can speak with a nutritionist or dietitian about what to eat when he is sick.



Say:

It is important for you to make a sick day plan to help you continue to manage your diabetes while you are having sick days. Talk to your health care team and use online resources and tip sheets to develop your plan.

Think about what things might get in the way of your plan. Write down these things and what you can do to take care of them. Thinking about issues that have happened in the past and ones that can happen in the future can help you to find information and resources that are important for the planning stage of problem solving. One tip is to listen to others' stories about issues that they experienced and how they learned and prepared to prevent or lessen the problem moving forward.

STEP 3 – SOLVE: *Follow through with your plan to solve the problem using your resources.*

Preparing resources and gathering important items ahead of time will make you more likely to use your plan when a problem comes up. Remember to talk to others when you need more support.

For example, John wants to solve the problem of running late in the morning and skipping breakfast. He has identified that the main problem is that he's staying up late at night watching television and drinking soda. He made a plan to substitute decaf tea for soda at night and turn off the TV by 9:00 p.m.



Ask:

What tools can John use to help him solve his problem using his plan?

Examples: John can set a reminder on his phone that alerts him when it is time to get ready for bed; he can have decaf in his home; and instead of watching TV John can read a book or listen to soothing music to relax and get ready for sleep.

**Say:**

The “Solve” step is more than simply solving the problem. Solving allows you to test out the plan you have developed and use tools to help carry out the plan. Sometimes solving the problem is one step in changing your behavior now to help you make a bigger change later.

STEP 4 – CHECK: *Ask yourself what parts of your plan worked and what parts did not work to improve the plan.*

Consider how the plan can be made better. After trying your plan, think about things that worked and things that did not work. Thinking about these pieces can help you improve your plan. Decide what you will do differently next time. You can learn a lot as you make progress and use what you’ve learned to solve other problems in the future.

Don’t give up. Use your strengths and have a problem-solving attitude when you experience problems. Stay focused and remind yourself that you have the tools and support to take care of challenges during your journey. Talk with others when you need help – remember that you are not alone.

**Do:**

ACTIVITY: Story Sharing: Problem Solving

The goal of this activity is to have participants develop a plan for common problems that affect their ability to manage diabetes.

- Give each participant the Problem-Solving Plan Worksheet. Ask them to think about a problem they have had related to managing diabetes.
- Ask participants to pair up with another group member to discuss and make their plan.
- Ask participants to share their plans.

Be careful about allowing participants to comment on the plans of others unless the person sharing specifically asks for advice from the group. The goal is to encourage people to identify ways to solve their own unique problems. Unsolicited advice can make people feel less empowered.

Common Problems When Living with Diabetes

**Say:**

Sometimes problems can be challenging, especially when a lot of events are happening within a short time period. However, there are powerful tools that we can use to solve problems as they come along. Remember you are not alone – there are people in our lives who can help us take care of our problems. Planning is a tool that can help us be prepared for different issues. We can think ahead about what might happen and have ideas in mind for how to handle it. Being prepared with a plan can help you take care of problems when they come up.

Let’s look at some examples of common problems that people with diabetes might experience.

**Watch:**

Healthy Eating at Family Gatherings and Special Events (Video: about 3 minutes)

**Ask:**

- What problems did Robin, the diabetes care and education specialist, and dietitian, discuss in the video?
- What solutions did she suggest for these problems?
- Do you think this strategy would work for you if you were in this situation? Why or why not?
- What useful tips did you learn from this video?
- What other strategies can you think of for sticking to your plans during family or special events?

Examples of problems: Struggling to resist tempting food at family gatherings, overeating.

Examples of solutions: Look at the menu ahead of time to plan out which food fits in your meal plan. Eat a healthy snack before you arrive. Fix only one plate to enjoy. Eat slowly and savor. Drink water. Enjoy a very small portion of dessert with a serving of fruit.

**Watch:**

Diabetes Travel Tips (Video: about 4 minutes)

**Ask:**

- What problems did David say he or others with diabetes sometimes experience when traveling?
- How does David prepare for unexpected problems he might experience while traveling?
- Can you relate to any of the problems that David mentioned?
- What tips did David mention that could help you with your travel plans? Which of these tips can you use even when you are not taking a trip?
- What other strategies can you use to be prepared when you are away from home?

Examples of problems: Flight delays, not having access to insulin or food when you need it, difficulty adjusting for time zone changes, and medicine timing.

Examples of solutions: Keep diabetes supplies where you can get to them easily. Bring extra insulin and medicines. Carry a meter and strips. Bring glucose tabs or snacks in case of low blood sugar. Wear a medical ID. Talk to your doctor or health care team before you travel to help you prepare.

**Say:**

It is very important for people with diabetes to be able to take care of problems that might affect their ability to manage diabetes. Effective problem-solving skills can help you deal with unexpected situations that throw off your routine or progress, so you can continue to take care of your health.

Disaster Preparedness

**Say:**

It is important for people with diabetes and their families to prepare for an emergency or natural disaster.

**Ask:**

What are some things you can do to prepare for an emergency?



Here are things you and your family can do to prepare for emergencies and natural disasters.

- Make an emergency supply kit.
- Let people know you have diabetes. Wear an ID bracelet or something that will identify you as a person with diabetes.
- Keep emergency supplies of water so you have enough to drink. Stay hydrated.
- Keep emergency supplies of non-perishable food. Maintain your eating schedule if possible. Take your medicines on time and check your blood sugar regularly.
- Keep something like glucose tablets or juice with sugar in it with you at all times to treat low blood sugar.
- Check your feet every day and get medical help for any cuts or sores.
- Keep a list of all your medical conditions, the medicines you take, pharmacies, and your health care team's contact information, in a resealable plastic bag.
- Make a plan for how you will keep in touch with family or friends. Keep the phone numbers of out-of-town family or friends you can call in case you have trouble reaching people who live near you.
- Discuss your emergency plans with family members or friends so they are aware and can better help you in an emergency.
- Keep important cultural or traditional supplies with your emergency kit as needed.
- Learn about what natural disasters can happen at the location where you live. You can consider what risks may affect you and then you can prepare.
- Using a mobile device like a smartphone, sign up to receive emergency management communications or notifications via text messages. Or stay up to date by listening to tv or radio announcements.

Close the Session

- Take final questions.
- Thank the group for their participation.
- Explain the at-home activity, if applicable.
- Remind participants about the next session. Ask if they have specific questions or issues they would like addressed.
- Ask participants to do the session evaluation.

At-Home Activity

Ask participants to do one item from their Problem-Solving Plan Worksheet.

- If participants did not do the worksheet during the session, give them a copy to do at home.

Resources

Use these resources to learn more about emergency/disaster preparedness, expand the discussion, or provide additional resources to participants.

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):
 - [Diabetes Care During Emergencies](#)
 - [Managing Insulin in an Emergency](#)
- [Ready.Gov](#)

Talking to Your Health Care Team

Overview: This discussion will focus on making the most of your visits with your health care team.

Group Leader
Instructions:

Talking Points & Discussion Questions



Many people find it hard to talk with their doctor or other health care team members. When you have a health care visit, you may not know what questions to ask or you may forget what you wanted to ask. You may feel rushed because the health care professional seems to have no time to answer your questions.



Think about a recent visit you had with a doctor, nurse practitioner, or other health care team member.

- How comfortable did you feel talking with the health care professional? Did you remember to say or ask everything you wanted?
- What are some reasons why you found it hard to talk with your health care team in the past?

Examples of reasons: Didn't know or forgot what to ask, felt like there was no time, felt embarrassed by my questions, felt like I should know the answers but did not want to admit that I didn't, felt like my health care professional didn't have time for me, didn't trust my health care team, was ashamed that I wasn't taking care of my diabetes, felt that my doctor wasn't listening.



Getting Ready for Your Diabetes Care Visit (Video: about 3 minutes)



What did you think when Dr. Gavin said you don't need permission to ask questions about your health, because you are the person in charge of managing diabetes?

How often do you feel like you are managing diabetes well and are getting advice from your health care team? What things help you to feel you're managing well? What things make you feel like you're not managing as well?

In our second session, we used a goal-setting sheet to track goals, test results, and other information at each health care visit. Have you used this sheet since we worked on our goals?

Let's take out a sheet of paper. Please write down 1 to 3 questions you would like to ask your doctor, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, dietitian, pharmacist, or other health team member on your next visit.

What can you bring to your next health care visit to help you work together with your health care team? Many smartphones have note-taking tools and apps that may be easier than using pen and paper. You can also set reminders on your phone so you'll remember the date and time of your health care visit and anything you want to bring or ask about.

Examples of what you can bring: List of questions and any recent problems, blood sugar test results, medication list.



Say:

For your health care visit, bringing your tracking sheet and a list of questions and concerns you want to discuss will help you to make sure all your needs and concerns are addressed.

- Think about your questions ahead of time. Write them down and give your list to the health care team member at the start of the appointment.
- Bring a list of all medicines, vitamins, and herbal remedies you take, including how often and doses (how much).
- Bring your blood glucose device and records of test results if you have them.
- Bring your goal setting and tracking sheet so you can talk with your health care professional about your ABCs, foot health, body weight, medicines, and goals.
- Talk with the health care team about other health exams that people with diabetes should have on a regular basis—including eye, ear, teeth/gums, and foot exams.

Your health care team may also use the teach-back method with you, where they will ask you to explain back in your own words what they just told you.

Be honest. Tell your health care team if you sometimes miss taking your medicines—and how often and why. Maybe you have trouble remembering to take the one pill at bedtime, or it might upset your stomach if you take it in the morning. It's important for your health care team to know about these issues so they can help you manage your diabetes and make changes that work for you.

Make the most of your health care visit. By sharing your questions, thoughts, and concerns with the health care team, you can get the answers you need to manage diabetes and meet your goals. You know yourself better than anyone else!



Do:

ACTIVITY: Think-Pair-Share: Partnering With the Health Care Team (role-playing activity)

The goal of this activity is for participants to think about questions they would like to ask at their next visit to the health care team, and to practice the questions they would ask during a visit.



Do:

ACTIVITY:

- Give each participant a copy of the Steps to Help You Stay Healthy With Diabetes handout.
- Ask them to look through the handout and think of questions they would like to ask their health care team and write them down.
- Ask participants to pair with another group member and practice bringing up questions and concerns with their health care team. Have participants take turns playing the part of the health care professional while the other participant practices asking their questions.
- Ask one person from each pair to share the strategy they used to help them bring up questions and concerns with their health care team.

When to Visit Your Healthcare Team



Say:

Give each participant a copy of 5 Questions to Ask Your Health Care Team.

How often should you schedule visits with the different members of your health care team?

It is recommended that you regularly visit a doctor or health care professional at least twice a year, and also visit specialists such as an eye doctor and dentist at least once a year.

Do not wait too long for an appointment. If your regular doctor is not available, ask if another health team member at the clinic can see you for one appointment until you can visit your regular doctor. You can also ask the clinic nurse or other team member to call you if they have any cancellations for your regular doctor.

If you do not have a regular health care professional, it is important to find one as soon as possible who you can visit for regular follow-up health care. If you do not have access to an Indian Health Service clinic, Tribal health system, or urban Indian health center, look for a community health center. Most community health centers accept Medicaid or Medicare and provide sliding scale payments for people who do not have health insurance.

Working with healers such as a massage therapist or naturopath can sometimes help you feel better, but they should not take the place of your doctor or other health care team member (like a doctor, nurse practitioner or physician assistant). Always talk with your doctor or pharmacist before trying “natural” home remedies or nonprescription medications.

Finally, if you are having chest pressure or increasing shortness of breath, DO NOT WAIT. Call 911 or immediately go to the emergency room.



Gilberto's Story B



- Why is having a support circle so important for people with diabetes?
- How does Gilberto find support for managing his diabetes?
- What is the benefit to engaging with providers and others regularly?



- Who else might be a part of your support circle beyond your providers?
- What role do families have in supporting people with diabetes?
- What are some ways that families can help a person with diabetes get the most out of their health care visits?



Family and friends can help during each health care visit because they can:

- Be there for emotional support.
- Be a second set of ears to keep track of the information from the health care team member.
- Help you keep track of health care appointments and test results.
- Help you to remember questions and concerns you want to bring up.
- Help with setting your health goals.
- Pick up prescriptions and remind you to take your medicines on time.



Family members can be a big help during health care visits, especially if they assist you in managing diabetes.

But sometimes, having a family member or friend at a health care visit can be frustrating—especially if the family member talks FOR you and makes it hard for you to “be in charge” of your visit.



Ask: What are some ways that family members or friends might get in the way of you being in charge during your health care visits?

Examples: Talking too much, asking questions that are “off topic,” and disagreeing with the patient in front of the health care team member (you can remind the family member that as the person who has diabetes, you are the focus of the visit; you can talk with them before the visit about how you would like them to participate).

What are some things family members can do to help you to be in charge during and between your health care visits?



Say: Right after a family member goes with you to the health care visit, it can be helpful to talk about what happened to be sure that everyone heard the same information and advice from the health care team member. It’s also helpful to talk with a family member about your health care visit—even if they could not be there with you.

Between health care visits, keeping family members informed about how you’re doing can help them find positive ways to provide support—and prevent them from doing less helpful things like nagging.



Ask: What are some things you can talk about with your family member(s) after your appointment?



Say: After visiting your health care team, here are some things you can reflect on with your family member(s):

- Go over the advice you heard from the health care team member(s). Talk about what it means.
- Discuss what seems to be working during health care visits and what you think can be improved.
- Review the health goals that you had set with the health care team.
- Share what you think your family member(s) can do to help support you in reaching your health goals.



Ask: Ask participants to think about ways their family members can support them during their health care visits and to write down some ideas. Ask participants to share their ideas in pairs, and then share with the rest of the group.

Close the Session

- Take final questions.
- Thank the group for their participation.
- Explain the at-home activity, if applicable.
- Ask if they have specific questions or issues they would like addressed.
- Ask participants to do the session evaluation.

At-Home Activity

- Hand out copies of the Team Roster Worksheet.
 - o Explain that the person with diabetes is the coach who is responsible for making sure everyone on the team understands their position or role.
 - o The coach can work with family members to complete the roster. Family members should talk about how they can support the coach and write down their specific roles on the roster. Write down contact information for each person.
 - o Make copies for family members to keep in a place where they can find it quickly. Remind participants that the coach can update family members as needed.
 - o The coach will need to keep the roster up-to-date.

Resources

Use these resources to learn more about how to build self-confidence, expand the discussion, or provide additional resources to participants.

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):
 - o [Your Diabetes Care Schedule](#)
 - o [Don't Blame Me!: Helping Providers and People with Diabetes Overcome Challenges for Behavior Change](#) (webinar recording)
- National Institutes of Health:
 - o [Talking with Your Doctor or Health Care Provider](#)



Building Social Connections in Family and Community Circles

PURPOSE

This Connecting Thread is intended for use in conjunction with the *New Beginnings* resource. Facilitators can supplement regularly planned sessions with the following information and discussion questions as relevant. Groups may also choose to spend a whole session discussing a topic that is of particular importance to participants.

BACKGROUND

Many people have concerns about sharing their health fears and worries with others. They may think that family members and friends won't understand, and that it's better to protect others from their health problems. It can also be hard for some people to ask for or accept help from family, friends, and the larger community. People with diabetes may think that spouses, children, or close friends will not support their lifestyle changes. Or that they won't be willing or able to participate in these changes—such as eating a healthy diet and getting regular physical activity.

Creating opportunities to speak openly about diabetes and creating a support system is important for people with diabetes—as it can strengthen their ability to make and sustain positive lifestyle changes. Taking care of your health when you have diabetes requires daily time and attention. Supportive relationships can make it easier to make healthy choices and stick to healthy habits. Support can also come from outside the home through members of the community.

When people engage with their community, it can create a sense of belonging and strengthen resiliency. Family, friends, elders, and community members—anyone in a person's support circle—can play a role in helping to keep the person with diabetes safe and healthy, both emotionally and physically.

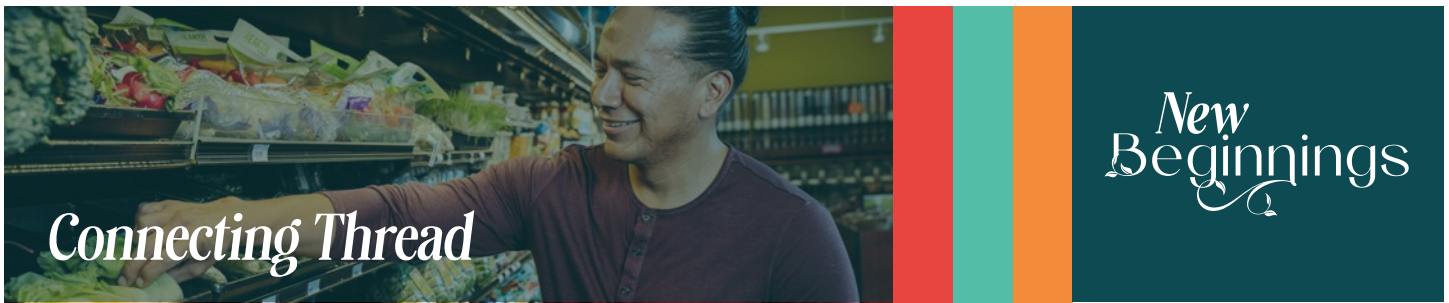
A good way to start is to discuss the different types of support available for people with diabetes and finding strategies to identify and reach out to those who can help. Connections can also be made by reaching out to community-based organizations for support as well as to find ways to volunteer and give back.

The more connected we are, the better we feel!

Involving Family and Friends in *New Beginnings*

One way to strengthen communication between people with diabetes and those who support them is to invite family members or close friends to join *New Beginnings* sessions. This approach requires planning ahead and understanding that each participant will be on their own journey when it comes to support. They may or may not have a spouse or partner. Some may have young children, some older children—or some may have no children. Some participants may even lean on older parents for support. Others will have supportive friends or neighbors. Some may need guidance to identify a support circle.

continued



Virtual *New Beginnings* sessions offer a way for you to engage participants who are geographically distant or have other travel or time limitations. See the *Connecting Thread: Facilitating New Beginnings Online* for more information.

KEY POINTS

- 1. Having a strong support circle can help lessen the stress of having diabetes, making needed lifestyle changes easier to take on and maintain.** A lack of support, on the other hand, can make diabetes management more of a challenge and can increase the risk of diabetes complications.
- 2. Keeping a diagnosis of diabetes a secret from family and friends can seem like a good idea, but it can do more harm than good.** Those in your support circle will be more likely to take positive actions when they understand what is happening in their loved one's life.
- 3. Family members and friends may be worried about how physically active the person with diabetes can be, or what they can eat.** Talking with family and friends about healthy eating and exercise can be an opportunity for everyone to make healthy lifestyle changes while also supporting the person with diabetes.
- 4. There are many ways that family members can help a person with diabetes.** For example, families can take it upon themselves to learn more about diabetes and create healthy lifestyle changes at home for the whole family. Families can encourage the person with diabetes to be independent and take care of themselves, help them solve problems, provide encouragement, and celebrate successes. Most importantly, they can take an active role in their loved one's diabetes management journey by preparing healthy foods together, getting more physically active as a family, and engaging with the wider community together.
- 5. Getting involved with the larger community to create healthy changes and overcome challenges together can help improve mental and physical health for all.** Look for opportunities in the community that encourage health and wellness. For example, walking groups, community gardens, and workplace incentive programs can be great ways to build social connections and maintain healthy lifestyle changes. Community activities that involve volunteering and charity are also great ways to give back and improve the lives of those around us. When we give of our time and our talents, we often also feel better about ourselves.
- 6. When talking with young children about diabetes, it is important to tailor language based on the child's age.** A 6-year-old may have "magical (unrealistic) thinking," while a 10-year-old may have a better understanding of the seriousness of diabetes. Regardless of age, children can feel guilty, angry, or fearful about their own future.
- 7. After explaining diabetes to a child, it is important to follow up and encourage them to share their feelings about the information.** Depending on the age of the child, they may ask questions about what they heard in the conversation, what causes diabetes, and what might happen to themselves or their family members.

continued



HANDOUT

- **Helping a Loved One With Diabetes When You Live Far Apart** has helpful tips and resources for how someone can support their friend or family member, even when they cannot be together in person.

VIDEO

- **Move Your Way: Tips for Getting Active as a Family** (video) provides ideas and suggestions for how families can start healthy behaviors together.

SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Are you hesitant to talk with family members or friends about serious health topics that may affect you?
- What are ways that family members or friends make it harder or easier for you to talk about and manage diabetes?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, how confident do you feel that you could name at least one person who supports you with your diabetes?
- If you don't feel very confident, who can you think of in your home, work, or community circles that you might talk to about helping you with your diabetes?
- Have you participated in events or groups within your community that focus on healthy eating and physical activity? Did you involve your family members or friends? How did you feel after participating in these events or groups?

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES

Think-Pair-Share: Children and Family

The goal of this activity is for participants to identify ways to communicate with children and other family members about the type of support they may need.

Ask participants to think about their concerns around discussing their diabetes with their children or other family members (invite family members to think about discussing their concerns with their loved one with diabetes). Encourage them to write down the things that concern them the most. Ask participants if they feel comfortable sharing these concerns with the group.

VARIATIONS

Ask participants to consider their concerns about supporting a loved one with diabetes or receiving support from a child or other family member. Participants can work in pairs to brainstorm ways to overcome their concerns.

Ask participants to think about ways they can help a loved one with diabetes, or the kinds of help participants with diabetes would like to receive. Ask participants to share their ideas with the group.

continued



Ask participants to role-play a conversation where they are talking about diabetes with a loved one. What are some words or strategies they would use to communicate and share support most effectively?

HOW CAN I HELP?

The goal of this activity is for participants to think about positive, constructive ways they can support a family member with diabetes and set goals for providing support.

Distribute the How Can I Help worksheet. Ask participants to do this activity with their family member(s).

Family members should start the discussion by asking “How can I help?” Family members should share specific ways they can provide support. Family members can work together to set three goals:

- 1.) **Support Your Loved One:** This goal should be based on the self-management goals that the person with diabetes has set. It can focus on providing moral support. For example: “I will go for a walk with you once a week to help you reach your physical activity goal.”
- 2.) **Take Care of Your Loved One:** This goal should be to create a supportive and safe environment for the person with diabetes. For example: “I will learn the signs of hypoglycemia and what to do about it.” or “I will bring a healthy snack when I come over to watch the game.”
- 3.) **Take Care of Yourself:** This goal should focus on how family members can improve their own health. For example: “I will learn about what I can do to prevent type 2 diabetes.” or “I will go see my doctor for a check-up.”

Ask the group if anyone would like to share their plans for helping a loved one who has diabetes. Remind participants to keep track of their progress toward achieving their health goals by:

- Keeping notes about how their ideas are working.
- Working with the family member to make changes to any goals that are not working.
- Setting new goals when needed.

Ask the entire group to give themselves a round of applause for developing a plan to support their loved one with diabetes.

Be careful about allowing participants to comment on the plans of others unless the person who shares specifically asks for advice from the group. The goal is to encourage people to identify ways to solve their own problems. Unsolicited advice can make people feel less empowered.

Helping Each Other to Get More Active: Using the Being Active as a Family handout, ask each participant to pick 3 to 5 items from the list of 10 that would work for their family and that they would be willing to try at home. Ask participants to share with the group which tips they will try at home.

continued



Helping Each Other to Be Active and Eat Healthy through Community involvement: Ask the group to consider community organizations and groups they could join that promote healthy lifestyles. Examples include 4-H programs, YMCA, community rec centers, schools, Cooperative Extension programs, Master Gardener programs, local faith-based organizations, community gardens, and farmers' markets.

Here are some questions to help group members brainstorm ideas:

- Who in your community is making sure that people have access to healthy food?
- Who is growing food in the community? Who is distributing it?
- How can you give back to your community, both as an individual and as a family?
- Can you identify one group in your community that you could reach out to about volunteer opportunities or upcoming events?

Resources

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): [Helping Friends and Family With Diabetes Diabetes | CDC](#)
- American Diabetes Association: Life With Diabetes: [Your Roadmap to Wellness](#)
- U.S. Department of Agriculture: [MyPlate](#)

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Commit to Quit: Stopping Smoking

PURPOSE

This Connecting Thread is intended for use in conjunction with the *New Beginnings* resource. Facilitators can supplement regularly planned sessions with the following information and discussion questions as relevant. Groups may also choose to spend a whole session discussing a topic that is of particular importance to participants.

COMMERCIAL TOBACCO

This Connecting Thread refers to the use of commercial tobacco and does not include the use of traditional tobacco intended for cultural, medicinal, or ceremonial purposes.

BACKGROUND

Quitting smoking is one of the most important things a person with diabetes can do to prevent complications. People with diabetes who smoke are at higher risk of heart disease, kidney disease, vision problems, nerve damage, and other complications than those people with diabetes who do not smoke. People who smoke and do not have type 2 diabetes are at higher risk of developing the disease.

Smoking affects a person's organs, nerves, blood vessels, and tissues. It also makes it harder for the body to maintain blood sugar levels. Smoking increases levels of other hormones that make insulin not work as well as it should. People with diabetes who smoke have higher blood sugar and a harder time keeping insulin levels in check.

According to the American Cancer Society, many people start smoking in their teenage years, and the addiction to nicotine (the main ingredient in cigarettes) can make it very hard to quit. *New Beginnings* Connecting Thread 2 Smoking cessation programs are a critical tool for people with diabetes to quit smoking and improve their overall health. People who are ready to quit smoking can get free support, coaching, information, and referral to local services by calling 800-QUITNOW (800-784-8669) or visiting www.Smokefree.Gov.

Electronic Cigarettes

The use of electronic cigarettes—called vaping—has increased in recent years. These products are also called e-cigs, vapes, e-hookahs, vape pens, and electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS).

What to know about vaping:

- E-cigarettes can potentially help adult smokers who are not pregnant if used as a complete substitute for regular cigarettes and other smoked tobacco products.
- E-cigarettes are not safe for adolescents, young adults, pregnant women, or adults who do not currently use tobacco products.
- E-cigarettes have the potential to help some people, but harm others. Scientists still have a lot to learn about whether e-cigarettes can help people quit smoking.

continued



- If you've never smoked or used other tobacco products or e-cigarettes, don't start. Learn more on CDC's [Electronic Cigarettes](#) website.

KEY POINTS

1. **It is very important for people with diabetes who smoke commercial tobacco to try to quit.** Quitting is the best way to prevent complications, such as heart or kidney disease.
2. **Smoking commercial tobacco is an addiction, and quitting is hard.** Many people will try more than once to quit before they stop for good. An ongoing smoking cessation program can help people quit. It can also help them accept their diagnosis, cope with their emotions, overcome their self-doubt, manage their stress, and solve problems.
3. **Stress and depression can make it hard to quit.** People who have stopped smoking commercial tobacco may start smoking again to cope with stress and depression. It is important to learn healthy coping strategies and get help for depression. Participating in diabetes self-management education and support services can be a great way to learn and practice coping skills. See the Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support Services Connecting Thread for more information.
4. **People who are trying to stop smoking commercial tobacco need support from family, friends, and their health care team.**

Talking to a health care provider about quitting is a good place to start. It is also important for people who smoke to talk to their family members about how they can help support these efforts.

SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Can you identify places or situations that make you want to smoke?
- Have you tried quitting smoking before?
 - o What was a challenge you faced while trying to quit?
- Besides ceremonial use, addiction, or habit, what is a reason that you smoke?
- What are some things you believe cigarettes help you cope with?
- If you were to begin quitting smoking tomorrow, who would support you?

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES

Write a letter to your loved ones, asking them to help you quit smoking and telling them what they can do to support you.

The goal of this activity is to get participants thinking about the support system they'll need if they choose to quit smoking and how they expect to rely on their loved ones. This activity will help participants think about the type of encouragement and support they want from people in their lives—to help them quit smoking or to help with the daily challenges of living with diabetes.

continued



Write down 3 to 5 smoking “trigger” situations and what you can do in those situations instead of smoking. The goal of this activity is to identify the times that participants typically smoke and help them think about why they smoke during those times. Examples include on their lunch break or after a stressful day at work. This activity will help participants think about other ways they can cope or spend time instead of smoking.

Ask participants to share their triggers and their new solutions with the group.

Resources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

CDC offers a range of resources to help people quit smoking and learn how smoking affects the health of people with diabetes. These resources include:

- [QuitSTART App](#)
- [Quit Smoking](#)
- [Smoking and Diabetes](#)

The National Cancer Institute’s (NCI) [Smokefree.Gov](#) website offers a range of free tools and resources to help people quit smoking, including:

- [Every Try Counts Campaign](#)
- [Pick Your Path to Quit Tool](#)
- [Smokefree TXT](#) (text messaging program)

The US Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA) [Want to Quit Smoking? FDA-Approved Products Can Help](#) website offers information about smoking cessation products regulated through FDA’s Center for Drug Evaluation and Research.

- [National Native Network: Keep It Sacred](#)

continued



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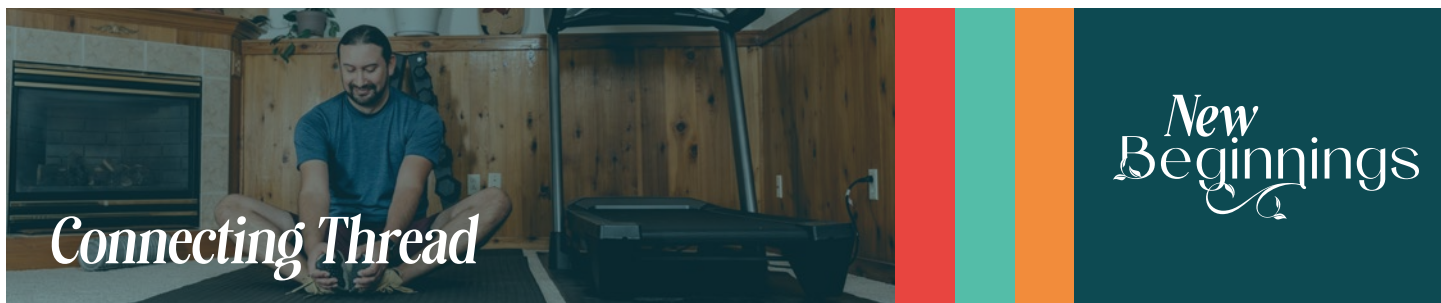
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Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support Services

PURPOSE

This Connecting Thread is intended for use in conjunction with the *New Beginnings* resource. Facilitators can supplement regularly planned sessions with the following information and discussion questions as relevant. Groups may also choose to spend a whole session discussing a topic that is of particular importance to participants.

BACKGROUND

Diabetes self-management education and support (DSMES) services help people keep on track to live well with diabetes. Diabetes care and education specialists (DCESS) are specialized health care providers who have the education, experience, and credentialing to help people with diabetes learn and practice self-care behaviors. As part of a person's health care team, DCESS provide comprehensive, patient-centered, and evidence-based education, skills, training, and support to people with diabetes. DCESS can be:

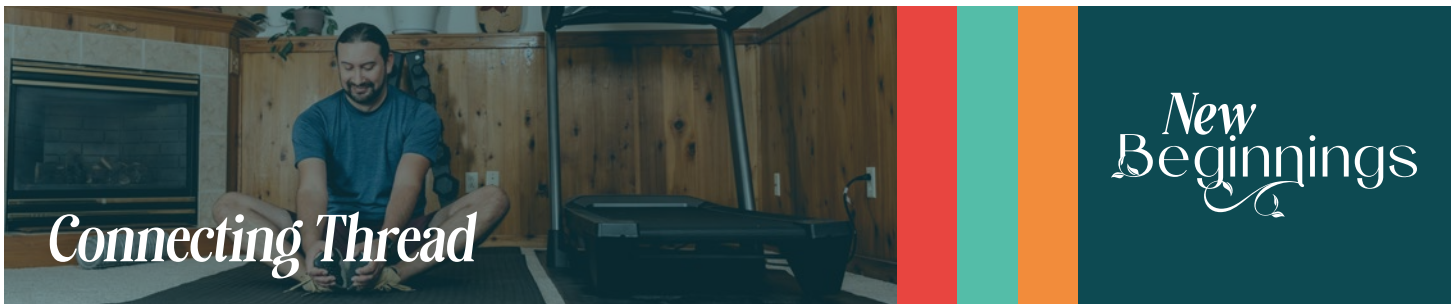
- A health care provider such as a nurse, physician, registered dietitian, pharmacist, exercise physiologist, physical therapist, or physician assistant.
- A community health worker or other lay health professional—such as a peer counselor, pharmacy technician, medical assistant, certified nursing assistant, nutrition and dietetics technician, or health navigator.

DSMES services are an ongoing source of resources, tools, and support. They are personalized to the goals and needs of the person with diabetes. They can be offered one-on-one, in group sessions, or both. They can also be provided online or through telehealth.

DSMES services can help a person with diabetes to:

- Make informed decisions about diabetes care and self-management.
- Work with their health care team to get ongoing help and support.
- Learn and understand how to manage diabetes by:
 - o Eating healthy.
 - o Being active.
 - o Checking their blood sugar (glucose).
 - o Taking their medicines.
 - o Solving problems and planning ahead.
 - o Coping with feelings of stress or anxiety.
 - o Reducing risks of complications and health problems.

continued



DSMES services have also been shown to:

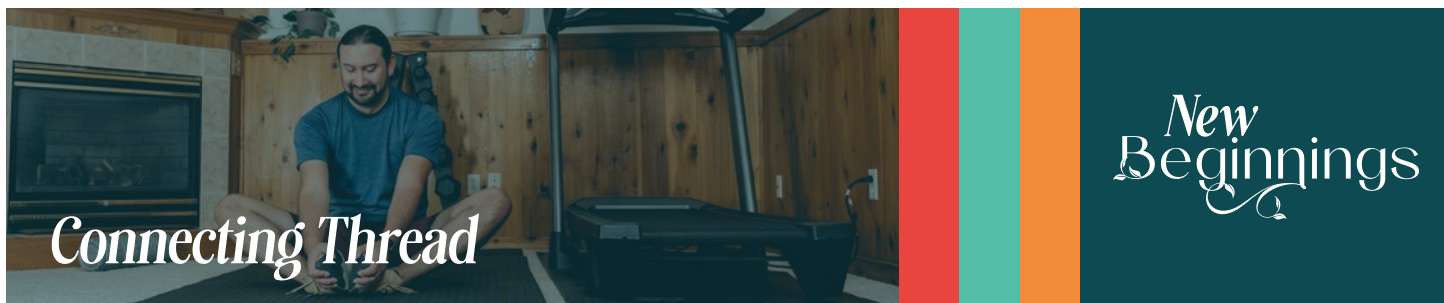
- **Lower A1C levels.**
- Prevent or reduce diabetes complications.
- Improve a person's quality of life.
- Lower medical expenses.
- Help people feel more empowered to manage diabetes.

As the leader of a *New Beginnings* group, you can share information about programs that offer DSMES services in your area. You can also encourage group participants to ask their health care provider for a referral—even if they've previously received DSMES services.

KEY POINTS

1. Diabetes care and education specialists (DCESs) are available to help you live well with diabetes. As a member of your health care team, a DCES works with you to create a personal diabetes management plan that fits your life. They will provide you with comprehensive care to address all aspects of your physical and emotional health so you can better manage diabetes and reduce the risk of complications.
2. DSMES services are a trusted source of information and support. An organization offering DSMES services must be accredited by the Association of Diabetes Care & Education Specialists (ADCES) or recognized by the American Diabetes Association (ADA). Because these programs have been accredited or recognized, they meet the high standards of these associations and are based on national guidelines. You can rest assured that you are getting the most up-to-date and useful information on how to manage diabetes.
3. DSMES services are individualized for you and can also connect you to a larger community of people with diabetes. Your DCES can help you set health goals and make lifestyle changes that you would like to achieve—while also connecting you to other people with diabetes who are experiencing similar challenges and concerns about diabetes self-management.
4. DSMES services are more than just information on healthy eating. While managing your daily meal and snack plans is crucial to diabetes management, there are so many other important ways that DSMES services can help you to keep healthy. These include how to:
 - Properly and safely take medicines.
 - Manage stress and anxiety.
 - Reduce the risk of diabetes complications.
 - Problem-solve and plan for emergencies.

continued



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT DSMES

Question: Where can I find DSMES services from accredited or recognized programs?

Answer: Using the [ADCES online search tool](#) or the [ADA service finder tool](#), you can easily search for programs in your area. You can also find listings of online and app-based programs.

Question: Will DSMES services cost me anything?

Answer: Most insurance plans, including Medicare, will cover up to 10 hours of diabetes education, or DSMES services at a time. This is sometimes also called diabetes self-management training or DSMT.

Question: How do I get a referral for DSMES services?

Answer: Ask your health care provider if they can refer you at your next visit. Even if you have participated in DSMES services or other diabetes education in the past, it is an ongoing resource that is available for you.

Question: Can anyone with diabetes participate in DSMES services?

Answer: Yes, DSMES services are available to all people with diabetes—whether you have just been diagnosed or have had diabetes for many years. It also doesn't matter what type of diabetes you have (such as type 1 or type 2). Self-management skills are important to all people living with diabetes.

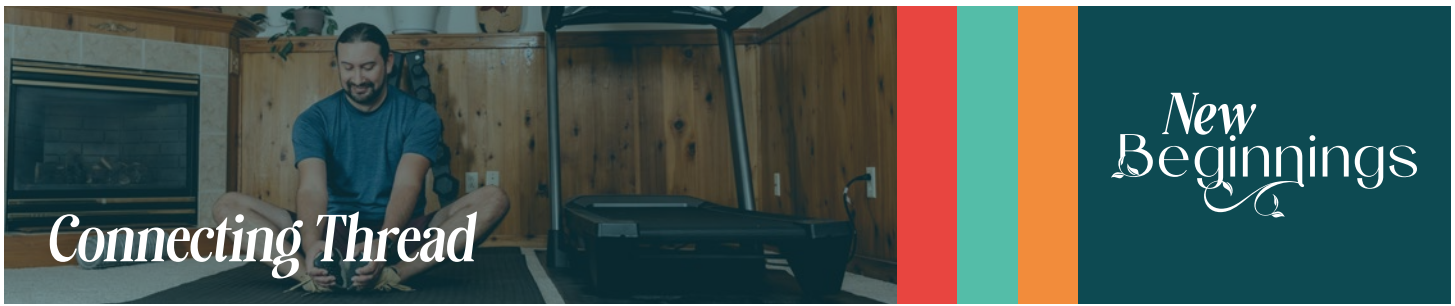
Question: When is a good time to sign up for DSMES services?

Answer: DSMES services offered in accredited or recognized programs are available anytime you need support to stay on track managing your diabetes, but the four critical times for delivery of DSMES services are:

- At diagnosis
- During annual assessment
- If new complicating factors arise
- Upon transitions in care

Ask your health care provider at your next visit about how DSMES services can help you to manage diabetes.

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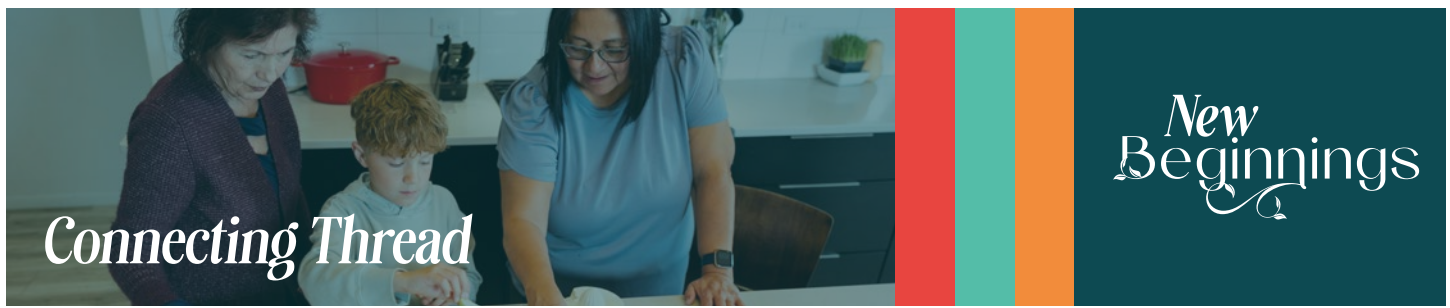
Resources

For People With Diabetes

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):
 - [Living with Diabetes | Diabetes | CDC](#)
 - [Diabetes Kickstart Video Series | Diabetes | CDC](#)
- American Diabetes Association: [Find a Diabetes Education Program in Your Area](#)
- Association of Diabetes Care & Education Specialists:
 - [Find a Diabetes Program in Your Area](#)
 - [How a Diabetes Care and Education Specialist Can Help You](#)
 - [ADCES7 Self-Care Behaviors](#)

For Supporting People With Diabetes

- [DSMES Toolkit](#) (resources and tools to assist state health departments and their partners in increasing the use of DSMES programs)
- [DSMES Toolkit: Your One-Stop Shop for Successful Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support Services](#) (webinar recording)
- [Discovering the Full Super Powers of DSMES](#) (webinar recording)
- [National Standards for DSMES](#)
- [DSMES Promotion Playbook](#)



Facilitating *New Beginnings* Online

PURPOSE

This Connecting Thread is intended for use in conjunction with the *New Beginnings* resource. Facilitators can supplement regularly planned sessions with the following information and discussion questions as relevant. Groups may also choose to spend a whole session discussing a topic that is of particular importance to participants.

BACKGROUND

Whether your group cannot meet in-person or you want to further your reach by holding your sessions online, *New Beginnings* can help people live well with diabetes from anywhere. Participating in an online support group is a great option for people who live in rural or remote areas, don't have consistent access to transportation, are unable to leave their homes due to health and safety concerns, or have busy schedules that make it difficult to attend in-person sessions. This Connecting Thread will provide you with the tools to facilitate *New Beginnings* through online sessions.

KEY POINTS

- 1. Online delivery can help you keep the group engaged.** Virtual delivery of *New Beginnings* via video conference can be an option when it is unsafe or difficult to hold a *New Beginnings* session in-person or to reach those who may have travel or other limitations.
- 2. You will want to research or try different technology platforms before you select one.** There are multiple video teleconference platforms available for leading online meetings/discussion groups, each with different features and pricing options. If you are part of a larger organization, they may already have a preferred platform that you could use. If not, you can often request a demo or a free trial from a platform vendor before making a purchase.
- 3. It will take time to orient participants to the new technology.** It's important to communicate with participants prior to the first online session—and conduct a “test-run” where participants log on early before the session starts, or on a day prior to the first session—to help the group navigate the new technology platform. Most video teleconferencing platforms offer a telephone number for those who are unable to connect to video.
- 4. Ground rules can be adjusted to reflect the virtual group environment.** Rules include muting your video/ phone when you aren't speaking, saying your name before you speak (especially on the phone), and recognizing that not everyone may have or want to use video. Let group members know they can add a photo of themselves to their profile in the platform, or send a photo that you could display at the start of the session.
- 5. The same facilitation skills you have developed for your in-person sessions will help you lead virtual groups.** While some adjustments are needed to facilitate from a distance, you will still use icebreakers, discussion prompts, and activities to keep the group engaged and on track.

continued



6. You can find tips throughout the *New Beginnings* materials to help you transition from in-person to virtual. While the core discussion content works online with little adaptation needed, each module has a Going Virtual Tips section. There is also a customizable PowerPoint template that you can use to show discussion prompts, content from handouts, and multimedia stories to lead your group through the *New Beginnings* modules.

7. It may be helpful to share content via email before or after sessions. When you can't be in the room together to pass out handouts or worksheets, take time before or after the session to share any worksheets related to the session. Sending these in Microsoft Word or Google Docs format will allow them to be easily completed without printing. Evaluations can be sent after the session using an online survey tool. There are many free or low-cost options for creating online forms. Again, your organization may already have a tool in place for gathering feedback electronically, or you can request a free trial of an online survey tool.

ADAPTING THE GROUP ACTIVITIES

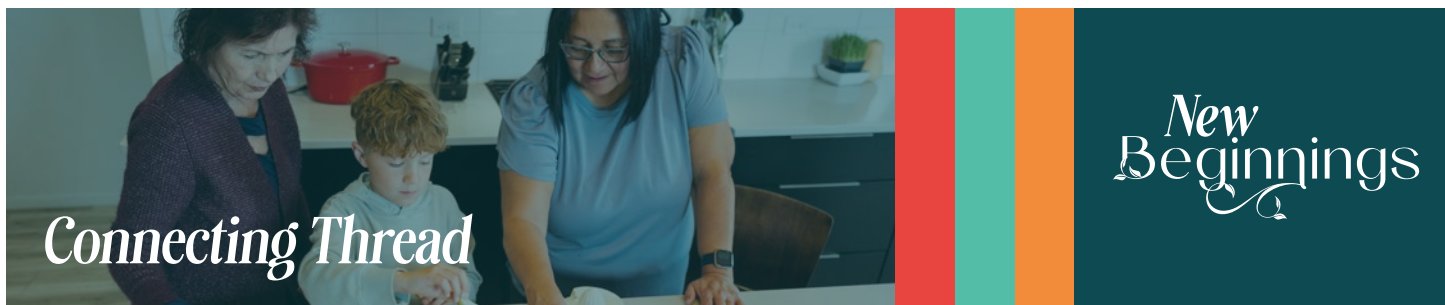
Think-Pair-Share

- Pair off participants using virtual breakout rooms through the video teleconference platform. You will need to check that the breakout room feature is available in the platform you choose.
- Consider leading a “Round Robin”-style activity where everyone takes time to think on their own and then shares 1 to 2 ideas related to the discussion topic with the group. This can be done by audio or video or by using the chat box (or a combination of both). Don't rely too much on the chat box because you don't want to lose the personal connection of the audio or video.
- Have group members think about their responses—and then, for homework, discuss with a family member or friend. They can then share highlights from the discussion in the next session.

Stories

- Send an email with a link to the audio or video files of any stories in advance of the session.
- Share your screen during the session and play the audio or video files. Be sure to share your computer audio as well as your screen view, or the participants won't hear the sound.
- If the story is an audio-only file, insert the file into your *New Beginnings* PowerPoint template along with images that complement the audio file.
- Consider putting text-only stories that you might have handed out to the participants on a slide in the *New Beginnings* PowerPoint template for each module.
- Alternatively, you could record yourself, a colleague, or a participant volunteer reading the story before the session.

continued



Role-playing

- Role-playing activities that are meant to be conducted in pairs can be done in breakout rooms—or, you can reach out to participants in advance and ask for volunteers to participate in a role-playing activity during a virtual session.
- Ask a colleague to record the role-playing activity with you in advance and then play it during the session. Consider pairing the audio with graphics in your PowerPoint.
- Consider changing to a “What Would You Do” activity where you ask for volunteers to share what they would do in the given situation if they were the person in the story or role-play activity.

Feedback Gathering

- Following a story or role-playing activity, you can use your video teleconference platform’s polling feature to gather feedback from your group members. This allows for anonymous feedback via multiple choice questions.
- Consider using a virtual whiteboard, or annotating on a handout or PowerPoint, to make the online session more interactive and gather input on the topic being discussed.
- It is important to look at what features are available in the platform and to practice using these tools beforehand.

Sample Activity

The **Be Your Own Best Friend worksheet** is an activity in Module 4: Building Self Confidence that can easily be adapted for an online group:

- Send the link to the worksheet through the chat box so your participants can access it before you begin the activity. You can also email the worksheet to the group ahead of the session.
- Ask one volunteer to read the examples of being your own best friend and being your own worst enemy.
- Use the interactive whiteboard feature and ask participants to write one example for each category.

These instructions are an example. You can adapt these steps according to your audience and your own comfort level with the video teleconferencing platform.

Resources

- **Delivering from a Distance: Reaching People at Home with the National DPP Lifestyle Change Program**: This webinar was hosted by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Diabetes Prevention Program. Presenters shared tips and best practices for delivering traditional, in-person diabetes programs using video teleconferencing.
- **Tips for Facilitating Online Peer Support Groups**: This webpage from the Academy of Peer Services offers tips and resources on how to effectively lead online support groups. Although not specific to diabetes, the information can be applied to New Beginnings support groups.



Preventing Type 2 Diabetes

PURPOSE

This Connecting Thread is intended for use in conjunction with the *New Beginnings* resource. Facilitators can supplement regularly planned sessions with the following information and discussion questions as relevant. Groups may also choose to spend a whole session discussing a topic that is of particular importance to participants.

BACKGROUND

New Beginnings participants might be worried about their loved ones developing type 2 diabetes. This Connecting Thread provides information about the ways that type 2 diabetes can be prevented, common risk factors, and how participants can help their loved ones.

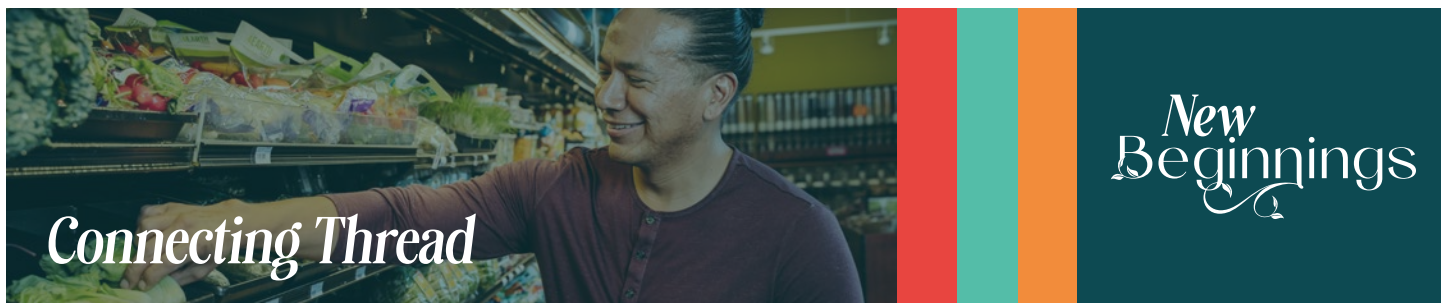
Family history of diabetes is an important risk factor for developing type 2 diabetes. People with type 2 diabetes often have a family member who also has the condition. But diabetes does not have to be a family affair. Type 2 diabetes can be prevented or delayed by making healthy food choices, being more physically active, and losing weight if overweight.

People at risk of type 2 diabetes may be diagnosed first with prediabetes. In prediabetes, blood sugar levels are higher than normal, but not high enough to be considered type 2 diabetes. If someone has prediabetes, they can make lifestyle changes to reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes. Making these changes is important because high blood sugar can damage a person's body and cause other serious health problems, like heart disease, stroke, vision loss, and kidney disease.

KEY POINTS – the following points are key messages to share with your loved ones to help them prevent or delay type 2 diabetes.

- 1. Know your health history.** There are several factors that might put you at higher risk of type 2 diabetes—from family history, to what you eat and how physically active you are, to whether or not you smoke, and more. It's important to understand the different risks of developing type 2 diabetes and how you can lower your risk.
- 2. Aim for some weight loss.** If you are overweight, a loss of 5% to 7% of your body weight can lower your risk of developing type 2 diabetes. That's 10 to 14 pounds for a person who weighs 200 pounds.
- 3. Establish healthy food habits and make healthy food choices.** Eating a variety of foods high in vitamins, minerals, water, and fiber while limiting high fat, high sugar, and high salt foods can help you to keep weight and blood sugar levels in check.
- 4. Move often.** Regular physical activity means getting at least 150 minutes a week of brisk walking or a similar activity. That's just 30 minutes a day, five days a week. Walking, riding bicycles, hiking, dancing, or actively playing games and sports as a family are just some of the great ways to stay active.

continued



5. **Stop smoking.** Smoking increases your risk of developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and some cancers. Find resources and smoking cessation programs at [Smokefree.Gov](https://www.smokefree.gov).

Support for Youth

American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) youth experience the highest prevalence rate of type 2 diabetes compared to youth of all other racial and ethnic groups in the United States. This makes preventing type 2 diabetes and raising awareness even more of a priority for AI/AN communities. The healthy habits participants model for their families can have a large impact on future generations and are especially important given this alarming trend for AI/AN youth.

Support is essential for making and sustaining healthy lifestyle changes. The lifestyle change program offered through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's **National Diabetes Prevention Program (National DPP)** can help people at risk of type 2 diabetes to:

- Make realistic, lasting lifestyle changes with the support of a trained coach.
- Discover how to eat healthy and add more physical activity into your busy day.
- Manage stress, stay motivated, and solve problems that can slow progress.
- Get support from people with similar goals and challenges.

Between sessions, participants can also go online and engage with the National DPP's **Personal Success Tool**. This tool can be accessed anytime, anywhere and it supports the content of the lifestyle change program. The tool includes videos, activities, quizzes, and pledges that the participants can make to reach their goals.

As the leader of a *New Beginnings* group, you can share information on preventing type 2 diabetes and the lifestyle change program. In doing so, you can help support families in reducing their risks and stopping the cycle of type 2 diabetes.

References

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- **Prediabetes**
- **Prediabetes Risk Test**
- **Type 2 Diabetes**
- **On Your Way to Preventing Type 2 Diabetes**
- **Prevent Type 2 Diabetes in Kids**

continued



References *(continued)*

- [Health Promotion and Diabetes Prevention in American Indian and Alaska Native Communities](#)
- [National Diabetes Prevention Program](#)
 - [Lifestyle Change Program](#)
 - [Find a Program](#)
 - [Personal Success Tool](#)
 - [Testimonials from Lifestyle Change Program Participants](#)

National Institutes of Health:

- [Preventing Type 2 Diabetes](#)
- [Risk Factors for Type 2 Diabetes](#)
- [Your Game Plan to Prevent Type 2 Diabetes](#)

American Diabetes Association:

- [Take the Type 2 Risk Test](#)
- [Diabetes Prevention](#)
- [Navigating Nutrition](#)



Spirituality as a Guide and Support

PURPOSE

This Connecting Thread is intended for use in conjunction with the *New Beginnings* resource. Facilitators can supplement regularly planned sessions with the following information and discussion questions as relevant. Groups may also choose to spend a whole session discussing a topic that is of particular importance to participants.

BACKGROUND

Spirituality means different things to different people. It can mean finding a source of strength, direction, and hope from a transcendent or higher power through ceremony, prayer, meditation, or faith. It can be building a connection to nature or Mother Earth to find peace. Recognizing and supporting the role of a person's spirituality in managing their diabetes can be just as important as understanding their education, cultural beliefs, knowledge, and skills. Spirituality can promote resiliency, reduce anxiety, and offer comfort and support.

For some groups, discussions about spirituality and faith will come naturally. Others may be uncomfortable with these discussions. If you are unsure, you can anonymously survey the group about whether they are comfortable with this topic.

Some groups may like general discussions about the role of spirituality in their lives without discussing specific religions or religious practices. Discussions that use the word "spirituality" may be safer for groups with participants that come from different religious backgrounds.

Other groups may find it helpful to talk about their faith as an expression of their spirituality. For groups of participants who have the same or similar religious backgrounds, it may be more appropriate to use the word "faith." Some groups may not be comfortable with any discussions about spirituality or faith. You should take guidance on this topic from the group. It is also important to become familiar with the local communities' cultural and religious practices.

KEY POINTS

- 1. Expressions of spirituality and faith look different for different people.** Listen to your participants about when, if, and how to incorporate this topic into New Beginnings modules.
- 2. For some people, spirituality can support diabetes self-management.** It can provide a greater sense of responsibility for their health. It can also help them accept their diagnosis, cope with their emotions, overcome their self-doubt, manage their stress, and solve problems.
- 3. Spirituality can be tied to core values and traditional Native practices.** Making the connection between core values, tradition, and health can help motivate people to take steps to protect their health.

continued



4. Many faith-based organizations offer diabetes self-management education and support (DSMES) services. You can find local programs that may provide spiritual resources to help people manage their diabetes through the American Diabetes Association or the Association of Diabetes Care & Education Specialists.

SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How, if at all, does your spirituality, traditional beliefs, or religion motivate you to manage your diabetes?
- How are your core values related to taking care of your health?
- What motivates you to take steps to manage your diabetes?
 - o Do these motivators come from within you or does someone/something else motivate you?
- What, if any, are some traditional customs, personal spiritual practices, or other religious practices that help you in daily life?
 - o Could you find a way to make these ways more a part of your life as it relates to your diabetes self-management?
- How can your traditional beliefs, spirituality, or faith help you to do the following:
 - o Work toward goals
 - o Cope emotionally
 - o Overcome self-doubt
 - o Deal with problems
 - o Manage stress
 - o Communicate with family

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES

Think-Pair-Share: Spirituality and Health

The goal of this activity is for participants to think about the role of spirituality or faith in their lives. For some people, spirituality may support diabetes self-management.

- Ask participants to think about the role of spirituality, traditional beliefs, or faith in their lives and to write down specific examples of how spirituality or faith might help them manage their diabetes or support a loved one with diabetes.
 - o For example, how can it help them cope with emotions, work toward goals, overcome self-doubt, solve problems, or manage stress?
 - o Pick one example that is relevant to the topic discussed during the session.

continued



- Ask participants to pair up with another group member and discuss their ideas.
- Ask one person from each pair to share some of the ideas discussed.

Prayers and Positive Thoughts

The goal of this activity is for participants to identify positive thoughts or affirmations to recite when they are trying to overcome self-doubt or cope with emotions and stress.

- Ask participants to create their own special prayer, meditation mantra, or positive thought to recite at a specific, quiet time of day.
- The special thought should be something simple to remember that gives them inner strength. For example: “Every day, in every way, I am getting stronger and stronger.” or “My blessings are many and my spirit is strong.” or “I can do it. I know I can.”
- Ask participants to write their positive thought in a notebook, journal, or somewhere meaningful so they can remember or re-read the words when they are reciting them, if necessary. Another idea is to record a voice memo on a mobile phone that can be played back whenever it is needed.

Filling Your Cup

The goal of this take-home activity is to identify a small moment that can be set aside each day for focusing on spirituality, calmness, reassurance, or self-love. Practice together so that participants can take this daily activity home with them.

- Describe the activity to the group by saying, “We’re going to practice a take-home activity that you can use each morning.”
- As you start each morning, don’t rush through your first cup of coffee, tea, or water, and don’t grab a travel mug and go. Set aside time—even 1 minute— to sit with this morning drink as a spiritual time, however you experience it.
- Sit down, hold the cup in your hands, and focus. Ask yourself: “From where can I draw my inner strength today? Where can I find more strength to nourish my spirit today? What would my ancestors want for me today? What do I want from my full cup today? How can I fill it tomorrow?”
- Ask participants to try the “filling your cup” activity every day for a week.

References

Gupta PS, & Anandarajah G (2014). The role of spirituality in diabetes self-management in an urban underserved population: A qualitative exploratory study. *Rhode Island Medical Journal*, 97, 31–35.

Sung Ah Choi & Julia F. Hastings (2019) Religion, spirituality, coping, and resilience among African Americans with diabetes, *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought*, 38:1, 93-114.



Understanding Health Information

PURPOSE

This Connecting Thread is intended for use in conjunction with the New Beginnings resource. Facilitators can supplement regularly planned sessions with the following information and discussion questions as relevant. Groups may also choose to spend a whole session discussing a topic that is of particular importance to participants.

BACKGROUND

People with diabetes and their caregivers get information from many different sources. They may read blogs and social media, watch videos, and talk with health care providers, friends, and family. There is a large amount of information to sort through. This information can be complex and, at times, confusing, and it can be hard to know what it means.

Health literacy is a person's ability to find, process, and understand health information and services needed to make decisions. People of all ages, races, income, and education levels can be affected by low health literacy. Other issues like poor eyesight, language and cultural barriers, and cognitive differences or decline can make it even harder for a person to understand information that is shared by a health care provider.

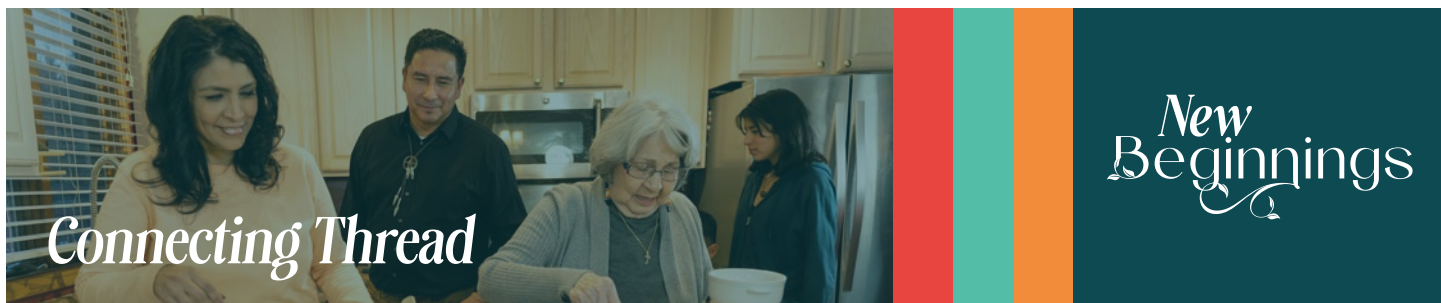
Diabetes care and education specialists and others who support people with diabetes have a role to play in lowering barriers to understanding health information. They have a responsibility to provide clear and concise information. When going through the New Beginnings modules, you can ask participants what areas they struggle with in terms of finding, understanding, and using health information. It may be learning how to find reliable information online, or how to understand instructions from their doctor. By finding out what is important to your participants and what they need, you can better engage them in finding ways to manage the challenges that come up.

Depending on the topic, you might ask a doctor, nurse, or pharmacist to join this session. Remember that the goal is to help participants learn to find and use health information themselves, rather than give them all the answers.

KEY POINTS

1. Provide information that is easy to read. New Beginnings identifies which resources are easier to read. When creating new resources, it is helpful to follow plain language guidelines and examples. These include knowing your audience before you write, choosing words carefully, organizing content so that it flows from one step to the next, and using headings, bullets, or tables to make material more readable. Learn more at the [PlainLanguage.Gov](https://www.plainlanguage.gov) website.

continued



2. Focus on the needs of your participants. Identify areas that are important to them. For example, they may be more concerned with learning to understand medicine labels than finding information online. People learn more from discussions that are meaningful to them, and they are more likely to understand information that is written with them in mind. *New Beginnings* identifies resources written for specific audiences, like Blacks or African Americans, older adults, or men.

3. Remind participants that many people find it hard to understand health information. It is a skill that can be learned. No one should feel embarrassed about being confused by information that is complicated and unfamiliar. When it comes to their health, people should be allowed to ask questions until they understand.

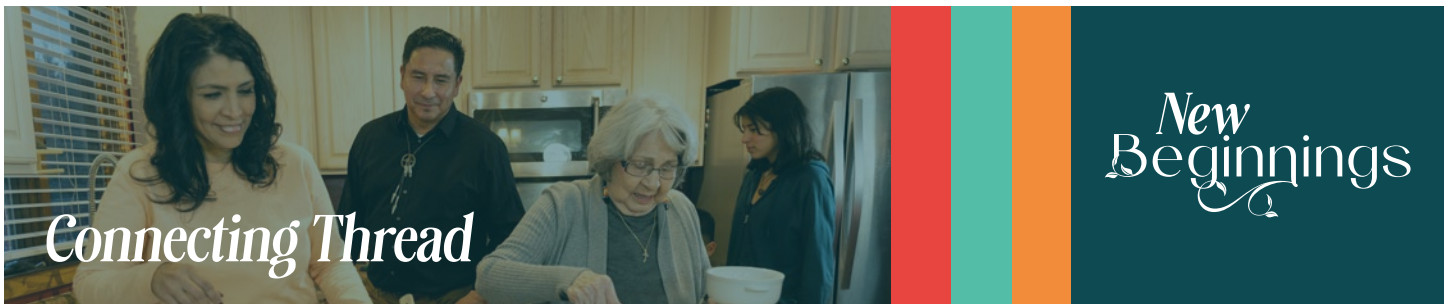
4. Use real examples and have the participants share back with you what you have discussed. If you are teaching participants how to read medicine labels, bring labels for them to read. People learn better when examples are hands-on and match what they will find in the real world. When possible, use the teach-back method—have participants explain something back to you or to each other in their own words.

5. Do not answer specific health-related questions. For example, someone may ask, “My last A1C was 12; what does that mean?” It is not appropriate for group leaders to answer specific health-related questions. Instead, help participants find the answer in one of the *New Beginnings* handouts or help them come up with questions to ask their health care provider. Learning how to find accurate answers to health-related questions on their own can help participants feel more self-confident about searching for and using health information.

SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Where do you find most of your health information about living with diabetes?
- Where do you look for answers to questions you have about your health? Your doctor or health care team? Friends and family? Online?
- Do you feel like you know everything you need to know to keep yourself healthy? Do you ever find it hard to understand or remember instructions you have received?
- Do you ever find it hard to:
 - o Follow instructions on medicine labels?
 - o Fill out medical forms?
 - o Read and understand complex information about diabetes?
 - o Do you have questions about finding, understanding, or using health information?
 - o Do you feel like you have access to information that suits your language and culture preferences and needs?

continued



SAMPLE ACTIVITY

Think-Pair-Share: Talking with Your Health Care Team

The goal of this activity is for participants to practice asking questions during health care visits to make sure they understand what their health care team is telling them. This is important for them to be able to take care of their health and take any necessary self-care steps before their next visit.

- Ask participants to pair up with another group member. Have participants take turns playing the part of the health care provider while the other participant practices asking questions.
- Ask the person playing the part of the health care provider to give sample instructions for taking new medication or give self-care steps for between now and a follow-up visit. You can use one of the four steps outlined in the handout [**Steps to Help You Stay Healthy With Diabetes | Diabetes | CDC**](#) as the example instructions to be shared.
- Have the other participant practice responding to this information using the teach-back method.
 - o The teach-back method is a communication tool used by health care providers to ensure that patients understand health information by having them explain it back to them in their own words.
 - o For this activity, participants can learn to use this same strategy themselves so that they know they understand the information.
- After receiving the health information from their partner, have participants respond by saying, “I want to make sure I understand what you have told me. Let me explain it back to you, and please tell me if I have it correct.” They can then summarize the information they received.
- Ask participants to discuss how this strategy will help them to understand health information be better prepared for their future health care visits.

Resources

Understanding Health Information on the Internet and in the Media

- [**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**](#) (CDC): Use of Online Health Information
- Medline Plus:
 - o [**Evaluating Health Information**](#)
 - o [**A Community Toolkit**](#) for Addressing Health Misinformation
- [**National Institute on Aging: How to Find Reliable Health Information Online**](#)

continued



Communicating with Health Care Providers

- **CDC: Don't Blame Me!**: Helping Providers and People with Diabetes Overcome Challenges for Behavior Change (webinar recording)
- **American Diabetes Association: Get to Know Your Diabetes Care Team**
- **Institute for Healthcare Improvement: Ask Me 3** (patient education program designed to improve communication between patients and health care providers)
- **Medline Plus**: Understanding Medical Words Tutorial
- **National Institutes of Health**: Talking With Your Doctor or Health Care Provider

Reading Food Labels

- Food and Drug Administration (FDA):
 - **The New Nutrition Facts Label**: What's In It For You?
 - **How to Understand and Use the Nutrition Facts Label**

Taking Medicines

- **Considerations for Blood Glucose Monitoring and Insulin Administration | Injection Safety | CDC**
- **FDA: The Over-the-Counter Medicine Label: Take a Look**
- **FDA: Educational Resources: Understanding Over-the-Counter Medicine**

Understanding Lab Results

- **Medline Plus: How to Understand Your Lab Results**

Understanding Health Insurance

- **Healthcare.gov** was developed to help people understand their health care options and rights under the Affordable Health Care Act.

Health Literacy Resources for Group Leaders and Health Care Professionals

- **CDC: Health Literacy**
- **CDC: Culture and Language**
- **PlainLanguage.Gov**
- **The CDC Clear Communication Index**

Reference

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. (2010). **National Action Plan to Improve Health Literacy**. Washington, DC: Author.



Be Your Own Best Friend Worksheet



New
Beginnings

Being Your Own Worst Enemy

Feeling guilty.

Telling yourself that you are no good, you can't do anything right, you brought this on yourself, and you will never change.

Worrying about everyone else, so that you do not take care of yourself.

Being fearful of facing the truth.

Seeking out people who are even worse off than you so that you can feel better, people who lead you to do unhealthy things like drinking too much alcohol, or people who make you think you cannot change.

Being angry at everyone, blaming others instead of making changes.

Thinking your changes are not good enough, for example, criticizing yourself for losing only 5 pounds when you want to lose 50.

Feeling that you cannot look weak because everyone looks up to you and you would lose respect if you asked for help.

Feeling that standing up for yourself is selfish and that you will embarrass yourself or your family. For example, worrying that you'll insult the hostess if you make your need for healthy food known.

Providing excuses for others' behavior.

Being Your Own Best Friend

Giving yourself a break and telling yourself to try again.

Reminding yourself that everybody makes mistakes, and it is never too late to make a change. Telling yourself that you can do it.

Reminding yourself that you have to take care of yourself if you are going to be there for your family.

Seeking support from friends, family, and faith.

Seeking out positive people who have energy and an upbeat attitude. Seeking out people like you who have successfully made changes.

Focusing on behaviors you have control over. Taking positive actions instead of waiting for other people to change.

"Patting yourself on the back" for making good changes, including small steps. Giving yourself credit for problem-solving.

Sharing your fears and not always trying to be the "pillar of strength" for everyone. Realizing that people respect those who are self-confident enough to ask for help.

Asking for what you need—such as help with being physically active or making healthy food or kind words instead of criticisms.

Not blaming yourself ("They're right, I deserve it."). Telling others to suggest ways they can help you instead of criticizing.

On the following page take a moment to write down some of your examples.

continued



Be Your Own Best Friend Worksheet

Being Your Own Worst Enemy	Being Your Own Best Friend
Write your own examples	Write your own examples





If you're ready to make a change, these questions can help you make a plan. Use your plan to help you reach your goal, step by step. Print these questions so you can write down your answers. You can then share your plan with your health care team.

- What's hardest about managing diabetes?
Example: I don't have time to do the things I need to do, such as physical activity. I often feel guilty.

- Why is this important to me?
Example: I know that physical activity can help me get stronger and assist with slow weight loss.

- Why haven't I made this change before?
Example: I don't have time for physical activity.

- How can I work around what gets in the way?
Example: I will try to find some time in my day to schedule a walk.

- What's my goal?
Example: I want to see if I can work up to 30 minutes of walking a day, at least 5 days out of the week.

- What's my plan to get started and reach my goal? What activity will I do—and when will I do it?
Example: I'll start by walking for 10 minutes at lunch time.



Problem Solving Plan Worksheet

*New
Beginnings*

Overcoming Common Barriers

What is one barrier you have managing diabetes that you would like to work on?

What do you think might be contributing to this barrier?

What information, if any, would help you make a plan to overcome this barrier?

What things might get in the way of overcoming this barrier?

What plan could you try to overcome this barrier?



Problem Solving Plan Worksheet

Write down some action steps you need to work toward the plan. Make a timeline to put each plan into action.

Action	Date to Finish
<hr/>	<hr/>
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What did you learn from using your plan? What worked best? What things will you do differently next time?



General Manager:
 (person with diabetes)

Player Name	Position (Role) <i>Doctor, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or dietitian</i>	Contact Information <i>(phone numbers, email, mailing address)</i>
	Diabetes care and education specialist	
	Drug store representative or pharmacist	
	Foot doctor (podiatrist)	
	Eye doctor (optometrist)	
	Dentist	
	Family/friend support (for example: spouse, parent, adult child, or sibling)	



Team Roster Worksheet

Player Name	Position (Role) <i>Doctor, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or dietitian</i>	Contact Information <i>(phone numbers, email, mailing address)</i>

MANAGING DIABETES



5 Questions to Ask Your Health Care Team



1. How do I manage my ABCs?

A: Get a regular **A**1C test to measure your average blood sugar over 2 to 3 months.

B: Try to keep your **b**lood pressure below 140/90 mm Hg (or the target your doctor sets).

C: Control your **c**holesterol levels.

s: Stop **s**moking or don't start.

Keeping your ABC numbers close to target levels can lower your risk of long-term health problems. Ask your health care team to help you set personal targets.

2. How will I know if my medicines are working?

Are your ABC numbers close to or at your target levels?

If the answer is yes, then your medicines and efforts are working. Keep up the good work!

If the answer is no, then meet with your health care team to see if your treatment plan needs to be changed. Be sure to take all of your medicines and blood sugar records when you meet with your care team. Bring prescription and over-the-counter medicines.



**Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention**
National Center for Chronic
Disease Prevention and
Health Promotion

3. When and where can I learn more about how to manage my diabetes?

WHEN

The best times for diabetes education and support are:

- When you're first diagnosed with diabetes.
- Once a year when you review your educational, nutritional, and emotional needs.
- When new complications come up—for example, changes in your physical or emotional health or financial needs.
- During changes in your care—for example, changes to your health care team, treatment plan, or living situation.



You can get help that matches your needs, goals, and life experiences.

Go to the [Find a Diabetes Education Program in Your Area](#) website to find programs that are recognized by the American Diabetes Association or accredited by the Association of Diabetes Care & Education Specialists.

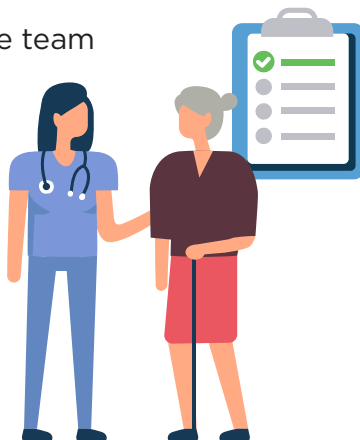
WHERE

- Local [diabetes education programs](#).
- Groups like the [American Diabetes Association](#), [Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation](#), and [Association of Diabetes Care & Education Specialists](#).
- Local diabetes support groups.

4. What vaccines should I have?

Getting vaccinated is an important part of staying healthy, especially when you have diabetes. That's because people with diabetes have a higher risk of serious health problems that vaccines can prevent.

Ask your health care team what vaccines you need and when.



5. When should I schedule health care appointments?

- See your regular health care team twice a year or more.
- See an eye doctor, foot doctor, and dentist once a year or more.



Regular health care helps you stay healthy, especially when you have diabetes. Ask to set up your next visit before you leave your health care provider's office.

When you have diabetes, you will have a lot to manage. But you can take it one step at a time. Your health care team will help you set goals and make a treatment plan you can stick with. Visit CDC's [Diabetes website](#) for information on how to manage your diabetes and live your healthiest life!

MANAGING DIABETES



How to Help a Loved One With Diabetes When You Live Far Apart

Offer your support.

Managing diabetes is not easy, whether a person has just been diagnosed or has been living with diabetes for many years. Family support can help a person with diabetes manage everyday tasks and deal with changes in care over time.

But if you live far away from your loved one with diabetes, you may worry about how you can help. Being prepared with the right information can help you provide support, even from a distance. This short guide offers tips that can help.



Learn about diabetes.

Learning about diabetes can help you understand what your family member is going through and find ways to help them prevent emergencies and manage their health care. It can also make talking with your family member's doctor easier. Here are some tips:



- Learn as much as you can about your loved one's diabetes medicines, supplies, and equipment, including their blood sugar monitor and test strips.
- Go to CDC's [Living with Diabetes](#) website to learn more about managing diabetes. See the **Resources for Everyone** section on page 4 of this guide for other ideas.
- Ask your loved one to teach you about how they are managing their diabetes and what kinds of support they may need. For example:
 - ▶ Do they just need someone to check on them now and then?
 - ▶ Do they need someone to take them to appointments or help make medical and financial decisions?
 - ▶ Remember—it's their health, so it's up to them how much they want to share with you. Let them know that you're there to support them if they need you.



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Gather information and keep in one place.

Gather important information about your loved one's health care, and keep it up to date. Put it in a place that is easy for your loved one or a caregiver to find. Keep copies for yourself. Here are the kinds of information you should collect:

- With your loved one's consent, make sure that at least one family member or close friend gets written permission to receive medical and financial information from the doctor or hospital. Choose one person to talk with all health care providers, if possible.
- Write down the following medical information:
 - ▶ Names and phone numbers of your loved one's care team.
 - ▶ Names and doses of your loved one's medicines.
 - ▶ Names and phone numbers of emergency contacts.

You can use the **Important Contacts and Medical Information** form on pages 5–6 of this guide to collect this information.

- Make sure your loved one or a caregiver knows how to contact you (or an emergency contact) in an emergency—but tell them to call 911 first.
- Create a list of resources in your loved one's community (see the **Resources for Everyone** section on page 4 for ideas). This list can include information about:
 - ▶ **Social support:** Check with your loved one's health care provider for support groups, social services, and other resources in the community.
 - ▶ **Financial support:** Look for community discount programs for medicines, blood sugar monitors, diabetes education, nutrition assessment, and counseling.
 - ▶ **Practical support:** Ask your loved one's health care providers or diabetes care and education specialist if there is someone who can help them get supplies and learn to use equipment, if needed. Caregivers can also learn to use equipment.



Find resources.

Different kinds of organizations can help with different kinds of resources—like meal planning, diabetes care, diabetes camps for children, housekeeping, or emotional support. Here are some places to go for help:

- **Local diabetes groups, senior centers, faith communities, and other community groups that provide support services.** Your loved one's health care provider may have a list of local services. You can also check the **Resources for Everyone** section on page 4 for ideas.
- **Local pharmacies.** Many pharmacies offer individual and group counseling.
- **Your loved one's health insurance company or Medicare.** Ask what diabetes education and support services are covered. For example, Medicare Part B covers a wide range of diabetes education and training.
- **State health and social services.** Look for information on the state government website where your loved one lives. Ask about community programs for children, seniors, and people with disabilities.
- **Your loved one may need a referral from a health care provider to get services from some organizations.** You can help them work with their doctors to get what they need. Remind your loved one that asking for a referral to a diabetes self-management education and support (DSMES) program might be helpful.
- **To find a DSMES program** recognized by the American Diabetes Association or accredited by the Association of Diabetes Care & Education Specialists, go to the [Find a Diabetes Education Program in Your Area](#) website.

Plan your visits.

- When you visit your loved one, you may worry that you don't have enough time to do everything you want to. Talk with your loved one ahead of time about the kind of help they may need. You may feel less stressed if you can focus on a few important errands or chores during your visit.
- Research your company's leave policies. Some companies allow sick leave to be used to care for a relative.
- Remember that your loved one may need help with things like home cleaning and repairs, shopping, or other tasks that are not directly related to their health.
- Check with your loved one or a caregiver to learn what medical care they may need. This information will help you set clear, realistic goals for your visit. For example:
 - ▶ Do they need to see specialists, such as a foot doctor (podiatrist) or eye doctor (optometrist or ophthalmologist)?
 - ▶ Do they need more testing supplies?
- Try to make time to do things that are fun and relaxing with your loved one. Suggest taking a walk together. Offer to play a game of cards or a board game.



Stay in touch.

From time to time, ask your loved one how they are coping with their diabetes and how you can help. With your loved one's permission, try to find people in the community—like other family members, friends, or neighbors—who can visit and provide support if needed.

Check in regularly with the people who are providing care to your loved one. Find out how they are coping and how you can help them.



Resources for Everyone

Association of Diabetes Care & Education Specialists

www.diabeteseducator.org

Links to diabetes care and education specialists and educational resources.

American Diabetes Association

www.diabetes.org

Information about diabetes prevention and treatment, nutrition, and weight loss.

CDC Diabetes Management

www.cdc.gov/diabetes/managing/index.html

General information about healthy living and diabetes care.

CDC Emergency Resources

www.cdc.gov/diabetes/managing/preparedness.html

Resources for people with diabetes who are affected by natural disasters, emergencies, and hazards.

Diabetes Action Network, National Federation of the Blind

<https://nfb.org/diabetics>

Information about companies and organizations that offer products and information for people with diabetes and vision problems.

Joslin Diabetes Center

www.joslin.org/diabetes-information.html

An online library with information about diabetes care, nutrition, medicines, and exercise.

Learn, Connect, Engage With the Diabetes Online Community

<https://beyondtype1.org/the-diabetes-online-community-doc>

Information on diabetes online communities.

National Family Caregivers Association

<https://www.caringcommunity.org>

Tips and guides for caregivers, a bulletin board for peer support, and lists of resources.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT LIVING WITH DIABETES,
VISIT CDC'S DIABETES WEBSITE.**

Note: Website addresses of nonfederal organizations are provided solely as a service to our readers. Provision of an address does not constitute an endorsement by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or the federal government, and none should be inferred. CDC is not responsible for the content of other organizations' web pages.

MEDICINES

Be sure to list all of the medicines your loved one takes—not just the ones for diabetes. Write down vitamins and other nonprescription (over-the-counter) medicines too.

Pharmacy: _____

Phone Number: _____

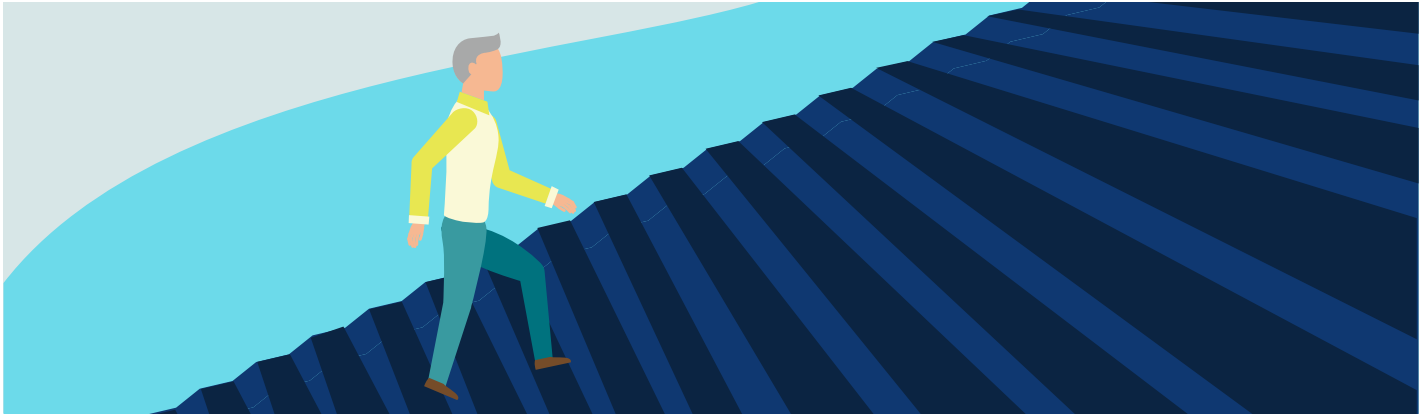
PRESCRIPTION DRUGS: DOSE, HOW OFTEN TAKEN	NONPRESCRIPTION DRUGS: DOSE, HOW OFTEN TAKEN

IMPORTANT CONTACTS (such as neighbors, relatives, or clergy members)

NAME	ROLE	PHONE NUMBER	E-MAIL
In case of emergency, contact:			

NOTE: CALL 911 IN AN EMERGENCY.

MANAGING DIABETES



Steps to Help You Stay Healthy With Diabetes

Follow these four steps to help you manage your diabetes, avoid complications, and live a long, active life. Use the worksheet on page 5 to keep track of your goals and progress. For more information, visit [Living with Diabetes](#) website.

STEP 1

Ask your doctor to refer you to Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support (DSMES) services.

DSMES services include a health care team that will teach you how to stay healthy and how to make what you learn a regular part of your life. DSMES services will help you make better decisions about your diabetes, work with your health care team to get the support you need, and learn the skills to take care of yourself.

To find a DSMES program that is recognized by the American Diabetes Association or accredited by the Association of Diabetes Care & Education Specialists, go to the [Find a Diabetes Education Program in Your Area](#) website.



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STEP 2

Know your diabetes ABCs.

Talk to your health care team about how to manage your ABC numbers—A1C, blood pressure, and cholesterol—and how to quit smoking. These actions can help lower your chance of having a heart attack, stroke, or other diabetes problems. Use the worksheet on page 5 to keep track of your ABC numbers.



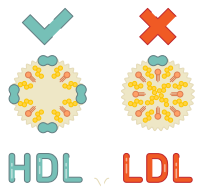
A IS FOR THE A1C TEST (A-ONE-C)

- A1C is a blood test that measures your average blood sugar level over the past 3 months. It is different from the blood sugar checks you might do each day.
- The A1C goal for many people with diabetes is below 7. Ask your health care team what your goal should be.



B IS FOR BLOOD PRESSURE

Blood pressure is the force of blood against the walls of your blood vessels. If your blood pressure gets too high, it makes your heart work too hard. Your blood pressure goal should be below 140/90 unless your doctor helps you set a different goal.



C IS FOR CHOLESTEROL (KO-LESS-TUH-RUHL)

There are two kinds of cholesterol in your blood: LDL and HDL. LDL or “bad” cholesterol can build up and clog your blood vessels. HDL or “good” cholesterol helps remove the “bad” cholesterol from your blood vessels.

- Ask your health care team what your cholesterol numbers should be.
- If your numbers are not where they should be, ask what you can do about it.



S IS FOR SMOKING

Smoking raises your blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels. If you quit smoking, you’ll lower your risk of heart attack, stroke, nerve disease, kidney disease, and oral disease.

**Ask your health care team about your ABCs.
Write your goals on the worksheet on page 5.**

STEP 3

Learn how to live well with diabetes.

Learn coping skills.

- Having diabetes can be overwhelming at times. But there are things you can do to cope with diabetes and manage stress.

Spend time with your friends or do something you enjoy—like gardening, taking a walk, working on a hobby, or listening to your favorite music. For other ideas, visit CDC’s [10 Tips for Coping with Diabetes Distress](#) website.

- Ask for help if you feel down. Talking about your feelings with a mental health counselor, support group, clergy member, friend, or family member who will listen to your concerns might help you feel better.
- If you feel down on most days, you may be depressed. Talk to your health care team, your spiritual counselor, or some other person you trust. They may be able help you get the support you need.

Make healthy food choices.

- Work with your health care team to make a meal plan that fits your life. Ask for a referral to a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) who knows about diabetes and can help you create a personal meal plan to meet your specific needs.
- Keep a food record or journal to keep track of how you are doing with your meal plan.
- Plan ahead. Plan your food each week so you have healthy options at home. When you go out, carry healthy snacks—like baby carrots, sliced apples, or nuts—with you.
- Ask your diabetes care and education specialist, RDN, or health care team for help learning skills such as reading nutrition facts and labels, managing portion size, and making healthy food choices when eating out.



Set goals for living well with diabetes. Write down your reasons to stay healthy, what you can do to meet your goals, and who can help you.

THREE REASONS TO MANAGE MY DIABETES:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

THREE THINGS I WILL WORK ON OVER THE NEXT 3 MONTHS TO REACH MY GOALS:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

PEOPLE WHO CAN HELP ME MANAGE MY DIABETES AND REACH MY GOALS:

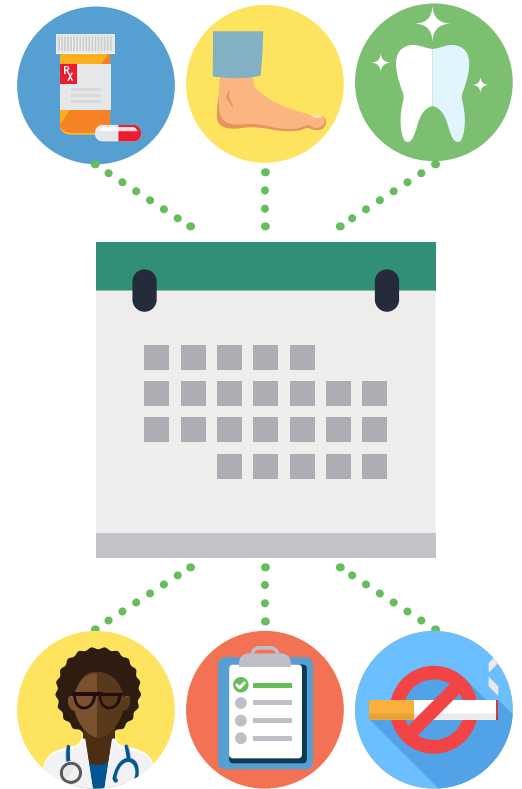
Be physically active.

- Set a goal to be physically active for 30 minutes most days of the week. Start slow by taking a 10-minute walk 3 times a day.
- Twice a week, work to increase your muscle strength. Use stretch bands, do yoga, or do heavy gardening like digging and planting with tools.



Know what to do every day.

- Take your medicines even when you feel good. Tell your doctor if you cannot afford your medicine or if you experience any side effects.
- Check your feet every day for cuts, blisters, red spots, and swelling. Call your health care team right away about any sores.
- Brush your teeth and floss every day to keep your mouth, teeth, and gums healthy.
- Ask your health care team how often and when to check your blood sugar.
- Keep track of your blood sugar and keep a record of your numbers.
- Check your blood pressure if your doctor tells you to and keep a record of your numbers.
- Don't smoke. If you already smoke, ask for help to quit. Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669).



STEP 4 Get routine care to stay healthy.

See your health care team at least twice a year to find and treat any problems early.

Follow the schedule of tests and check-ups on the worksheets on pages 5 and 6. If you have Medicare, check to see how your plan covers diabetes care.

For more information about living with diabetes, visit CDC's [Diabetes website](#).

My Diabetes Care Record

Write down goals to help you live well with diabetes. Get regular check-ups and write down the dates and results of all tests. Take this record with you to your health care visits.

A1C: Get this checked at least 2 times each year.

My A1C Goal:

A1C TEST DATE	A1C TEST RESULT

Blood Pressure: Get this checked at every visit.

My Blood Pressure Goal:

BLOOD PRESSURE DATE	BLOOD PRESSURE RESULT

Cholesterol: Get this checked 1 time each year.

My Cholesterol Goal:

CHOLESTEROL TEST DATE	CHOLESTEROL TEST RESULT

Ask your health care provider what exams and vaccinations you should have and how often you should have them. Use this worksheet to keep track of this information.

Exams, tests, and reviews you should have each visit.

EXAM, TEST, OR REVIEW	DATE	RESULTS	DATE	RESULTS	DATE	RESULTS
FOOT CHECK						
WEIGHT CHECK						
REVIEW SELF-CARE PLAN						
REVIEW MEDICINES						

Exams, vaccines, and tests you should have at least 1 time a year.

TYPE OF EXAM, VACCINE, OR TEST	DATE	RESULTS	DATE	RESULTS	DATE	RESULTS
DENTAL EXAM						
DILATED EYE EXAM						
COMPLETE FOOT EXAM						
FLU SHOT						
KIDNEY CHECK						

Vaccines as recommended by health care provider.

TYPE OF VACCINE	DATE	RESULTS	DATE	RESULTS	DATE	RESULTS
VACCINE:						
VACCINE:						
VACCINE:						