

# Supportive Environments

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## Objectives

- 01 Define a "supportive environment"
- 02 Recognize key aspects of a supportive environment for weight loss goals
- 03 Know how to create a supportive environment for weight loss

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### Supportive environment

- ▶ A "supportive environment" for weight loss goals refers to a surrounding where individuals feel encouraged, motivated, and have the necessary tools and people around them to consistently work towards their weight loss objectives, often including family, friends, healthcare providers, and communities that actively promote healthy habits and positive reinforcement.
- ▶ Includes supportive relationships
  - ▶ You may be anxious to tell people you're working on losing weight. But, by keeping quiet and not telling them what kind of support you want, they won't know how they can help.

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### Key aspects of a supportive environment for weight loss goals:

- Open communication:
- Positive reinforcement:
- Accountability:
- Shared healthy habits:
- Professional guidance:
- Community support groups:

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### Open communication:

- Sharing your goals openly with loved ones and seeking their understanding and support.
  - Tell friends you're working on reaching a healthy weight.
  - Tell your family and friends about the kind of support you want (more on that later).
- It is okay to be assertive - telling people how you feel in a clear, honest, and respectful way.
  - Use "I" statements to tell them about the support you want.

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### Positive reinforcement:

- Receiving praise and encouragement from yourself and others for progress made, no matter how small.
- Actively rewarding yourself for healthy behaviors and achieving milestones.
  - Rewards should be constructive to your overall goals
- Positive feedback loop.
  - Encourages repetition of behaviors
  - Celebrates success rather than focusing on negatives (shown to be more effective)

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### Accountability:

- ▶ Having people who check in on your progress and hold you accountable for your commitments.
- ▶ Support from Weight Management Program staff
  - ▶ Attending appointments and checking in even during challenging stretches
- ▶ Set goals, write them down, and check in every so often on progress
  - ▶ Focus on Process Goals over Outcome Goals
    - ▶ Outcome goals are a result that you hope to achieve
    - ▶ Process goals are the actions of activities you will need to repeat to achieve that result

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### Shared healthy habits:

- ▶ Family and friends who incorporate healthy eating and exercise routines together may aid in developing lifestyle changes.
- ▶ Team up with a friend, family member, coworker, neighbor, etc., interested in health and physical activity.
- ▶ Examples of Sharing Healthy Habits
  - ▶ Create healthy competition (focus more on process vs outcome)
  - ▶ Exercise a team effort
  - ▶ Cook and eat together / share recipes if long-distance

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### Professional guidance:

- ▶ Taking advantage of access to your resources
  - ▶ Weight Loss Provider
  - ▶ PCP
  - ▶ Registered Dietitian
  - ▶ Mental health support
  - ▶ Physical therapists
- ▶ If accessible finding a certified personal trainer to help guide routine and comfortability with physical activity and/or in the gym can be helpful

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### Community Support:

- ▶ Joining a weight loss group or online forum to connect with others facing similar challenges and share experiences (like this one!)
- ▶ Find a weight loss role model to inspire you and keep you on track.
- ▶ Social Media Groups
  - ▶ Do proceed with caution on these groups – follow weight loss advice from professionals only

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### How to create a supportive environment for weight loss:

```

    graph TD
      A[Set] --> B[Communicate]
      B --> C[Involve]
      C --> D[Celebrate]
      D --> E[Address]
      A --- A1[Set realistic goals]
      B --- B1[Communicate your reasons]
      C --- C1[Involve your household]
      D --- D1[Celebrate milestones]
      E --- E1[Address potential challenges]
    
```

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### Set realistic goals:

- ▶ Establish achievable targets that align with your lifestyle and health conditions.
  - ▶ Set Process Goals
    - ▶ This will help you achieve your outcome goals in a more systematic way
  - ▶ Okay to have an overarching outcome goal as this can be motivating and provide direction, but it can also be overwhelming and out of your control.
- ▶ Realistic goal example: lose 10 pounds in 3 months by exercising 3 times a week and hitting minimum protein goal

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## Communicate your reasons:

- ▶ Explain why weight loss is important to you and how their support can help.
- ▶ Specific examples of support you may want to communicate:
  - ▶ Don't pressure me to eat or "just have a little taste"
  - ▶ Respect the food choices I make
  - ▶ Offer to exercise with me
  - ▶ Don't give me food gifts
  - ▶ Respect/support my lifestyle changes and choices

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## Involve your household:

Sharing healthy habits in the household

Make healthy food choices available at home and encourage family meals.

Make meal planning/shopping a family activity

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## Address potential challenges:

- ▶ Discuss potential obstacles in your support system that might hinder your progress and develop strategies to manage them.
- ▶ Potential Challenges:
  - ▶ Unrealistic expectations
  - ▶ Emotional Eating
  - ▶ Time constraints
  - ▶ Unawareness (not verifying nutrition or checking weight)
  - ▶ All or nothing thinking
  - ▶ Peer Pressure

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## Celebrate milestones:

Acknowledge smaller goals you have reached along the way.

### Examples:

- Being able to walk upstairs without getting winded
- Feeling comfortable in clothes you previously couldn't wear
- Improved digestion
- Increased stamina during exercise
- Being able to reach down easily without discomfort
- Feeling more in control of your eating habits

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Questions?

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Thank You!

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