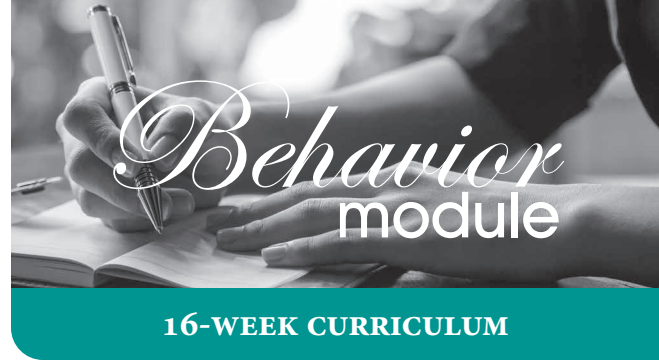


RELAPSE PART 2: PREVENTING RELAPSE



Eating out, celebrating, feeling angry, bored, sad, or pressured to conform... These are examples of high-risk situations that can trigger the urge to eat. Knowing how to manage these situations can help you stay in control so that you don't fall back into old habits.

High-risk situations can provoke a lapse, or a single instance of giving in to temptation. Since no one is perfect, lapses are to be expected from time to time. But, when one slip leads to another, it's called a relapse. If a relapse causes you to give up on losing weight, it becomes a collapse.

Whether a lapse leads to a relapse or a full-blown collapse depends on how the situation is perceived. If you view a lapse as an isolated event or temporary setback, you're likely to get right back on track. If, on the other hand, you view it as a sign of failure, then you're more likely to abandon your weight loss efforts and return to your old eating and exercise habits.

The best way to prevent a lapse from spiraling out of control is to minimize the chances of it occurring in the first place.

Identify your high-risk situations.

What emotions, events, people or times of the day tempt you to overeat or skip your exercise routine? Recording in your weekly diary the time of day, where you are, or how you feel when eating can help you identify your high-risk situations.

Have a plan in mind.

If you can't avoid the situation, try to anticipate potential problems and plan in advance how you will cope. For example, at a party, you could hold a non-caloric drink in your hand instead of a plate of food, engage in conversation, etc. Have at least three strategies in mind to help you cope with the situation, using the one that works best for you at the time.

Practice how you will respond.

For example, mentally rehearse in advance how to politely, but firmly, say "no" to an offer of food.

Use the Lifestyle Skills modules to help you control high-risk situations.

For example, if emotions are a trigger, review the modules *Emotional Eating* and *Managing Stress*. If social pressure is an issue, see *Saboteur: With You or Against You*. For tips on staying in control, review *Eating Triggers*.

Believe in yourself.

Your ability to cope with high-risk situations depends on your learned skills and the belief that you are capable of using these skills to deal with challenging situations. The *Positive Self-Affirmations* module can help.

If you do experience a lapse, take these steps to help prevent a relapse:

Know the warning signs.

If you feel ashamed, guilty, depressed, angry, or out of control, you may be at risk for a relapse. Recognizing your reactions to a lapse is the first step in regaining control.

Stay calm.

Focus not on what you did, but what you're going to do. Take a deep breath and remind yourself that you have the skills to cope with the situation.

