

Overcoming Barriers

A barrier is a roadblock to success. A barrier can be anything that gets in the way of healthy eating or doing physical activity. Learning how to deal with barriers will help you lose weight and manage diabetes. Barriers change over time. Barriers often change as you change. They may change as you face new challenges. You will need to make new plans to deal with these changes.

You can meet these challenges if you keep three things in mind:

- ▶ Set priorities. Don't expect yourself to deal with all the barriers at once. Start with the ones that give you the best chance for success right now. Then get after the others.
- ▶ Use your problem-solving skills.

- ▶ Keep trying. Your determination and continued use of problem-solving skills will give you the success you want. Don't give up when things don't work out the first time. You can make it work out for you.

Remember the 6 steps to solving any problem?

First set a goal. Then:

1. **Identify the specific barrier.** Be as clear as you can about what is causing you trouble.
2. **Brainstorm solutions.** List your resources. Think of as many ways as you can to use your resources to solve this problem.
3. **Compare solutions.** List the pros and cons of each. Be realistic. Be practical.
4. **Make a plan.** Be as specific as you can. Make sure you can do your plan.
5. **Put the plan to work.** Test your plan by trying it out.
6. **Evaluate how the plan worked.** Did the plan help

KEY GOALS

Every week you continue to work on 4 key goals:

- ⊙ Limit RED foods
- ⊙ Increase GREEN activity
- ⊙ Hold Family Meetings
- ⊙ Keep Track of Weight

solve your problem? If not, go back to step 3 and pick another solution to try. Or back to step 2 and brainstorm again.



Keep all your resources in mind when problem-solving.

First you set goals. Next you identified barriers to success. Now it's important to identify resources that can help you overcome each barrier. Ask yourself: *What can help me deal with barriers? Who can help me?* You don't have to do everything by yourself. You have resources that can help you succeed.

Here's what you'll learn about in this module:

- ▶ Overcoming barriers to success
- ▶ Keeping all your resources in mind when making plans
- ▶ What to do when a plan doesn't seem to work



Learning how to deal with barriers will help you lose weight and take care of diabetes.

This is the part of *brainstorming solutions* that people often forget to do. It's an important step. It's where you decide how to use the Activity Reference Guide (ARG) and the Food Reference Guide (FRG). How about your Lifestyle Logs, Weight Graphs, and the TLP Rewards system? Or Family Meetings, weekly schedules, family and friends? What has helped you in the past? Who could support you now?

Keep 3 things in mind when you think about using all your resources:

- ▶ Some resources can help you deal with more than one barrier. For example, your Lifestyle Log can help you keep track of your physical activity as well as your RED foods. Your parents can help you plan weekly activity schedules. They can help you plan weekly menus, or do physical activities with you. They can support you in many other ways.
- ▶ A plan can use more than one resource.
- ▶ A plan can have more than one part to it.



What should I do if I've identified a barrier, made a plan and discovered that it doesn't work?

- ▶ Try to figure out what went wrong. If you followed your plan and it really didn't work, start over using your problem-solving skills. Go back to the first step (identifying the problem) and ask yourself: *Did I identify all the barriers? Were there ones that I did not expect? Or did I get the barriers right, but my plan didn't work as well as I had hoped?*

When you consider barriers, ask yourself questions like these: *What might make it hard to reach this goal? What feelings could make it hard to reach this goal? What habits are getting in my way? Are any special events or holidays coming up? Are any important people in my life barriers to my success?*

For example, if it is hard to avoid RED foods when you go to fast food restaurants with your friends, write it down. If it's hard to meet your RED food goals if you don't plan your meals and snacks in advance with your parent, write it down.

The more specific the barriers you identify, the more likely you will be able to plan effective ways to deal with them. For example, saying, "I'm eating too many RED foods," is not as

specific as saying, "I'm eating too many RED foods at lunch." This is still not as specific as saying, "I'm eating too many RED foods at lunch at school."

If you think that you have correctly identified the barriers, brainstorm again. Begin by brainstorming about the resources you have. If you can identify all your resources, it will be easier to think of plans that might work.

Next, compare solutions and decide on another plan. Take time to write down how you will use your resources in your plan. Try to state positively what you will do, not what you won't do. Be as specific as you can: *What will I do? When will I do it? How will I do it? With whom will I do it?*

For example, if a friend is a resource, your plan could include asking the friend to walk with you after school 3 days a week, either in the park or for an hour on a route you have planned in advance.

- ▶ Don't let yourself get too discouraged if things don't work out right away. If you just keep after it, you will be able to make a plan that will work.



Use your family meetings to explain your plans and ask for the support you need.

If you can identify all your resources, it will be easier to think of plans that might work.

Tyrone discovered that he often ate RED foods when he hung out at his friend Sam's house. He knew this wasn't good for him, but he wanted to keep Sam as a friend. He didn't know what to do.

"This would be a good time to use your problem-solving skills. I'll help you," said his dad. Tyrone didn't want to do that because he was afraid that he would have to stop being friends with Sam.

After asking some questions, his father pointed out that Sam wasn't the problem. "The problem is being around all the RED food at Sam's home. That's the real barrier, not your friendship with Sam. Pinning down the real barrier is the first step in dealing with it. Sometimes, what you think is a barrier really isn't," he said. This made Tyrone feel better.

Together they brainstormed about some solutions:

- ▶ He could just try harder.
- ▶ He could stop hanging around with Sam.
- ▶ He could not go over to Sam's house at all.
- ▶ He could tell Sam that he wants to eat healthy.
- ▶ He could eat some GREEN foods first so he would not go over to Sam's home hungry.
- ▶ He could get outside and do something active instead.

Tyrone thought about his choices. Then he made a plan. He would not go over to Sam's home hungry. He tried this for a week and found that he was still eating too many RED foods at Sam's house. Even though he wasn't hungry, he was tempted by the RED foods and ate them anyway.

He took another look at the problem. He decided on a different plan. He explained to Sam that he wanted to eat healthy. He also asked Sam to do something active outside with him instead of hanging around inside.

Sam agreed to the plan. He was happy to try to help Tyrone. When Tyrone evaluated the plan after another week, he found that the new plan had worked so well that he had lost 2 pounds!

He thanked his dad for helping him. "I'm proud of you," his dad said. "You are really learning how to deal with barriers."



Why did Tyrone's second plan work better?

Have you ever been in a situation like Tyrone was? How would you like to handle it?

What are the biggest barriers to success right now?

Before you can use your problem-solving skills to deal with a barrier, you must break your 4 key goals into many smaller, more specific goals. Call them “step-by-step goals.” Or call them “sub-goals.” Ask yourself: *What do I want to accomplish this week? What are some of the biggest challenges I want to deal with right now?* For example:

- ▶ Limiting RED foods: Pick one specific RED food goal to work on now. Are you trying to make sure you eat a healthy breakfast before going to school? Or are you focused on limiting RED food snacks?

- ▶ Increasing GREEN Activity: Pick one specific GREEN activity to work on now. Be as specific as you can. For example, if your goal is to be physically active every day, say so. If it is to be physically active 5 out of 7 days, say so.

First, get your sub-goals clear. Next, think about the barriers you face. Then, begin using your problem-solving skills. Of course, you can't deal with all of the barriers at once. The important thing now is to pick one or two barriers, make a plan of attack, and to work at them until you have turned things around. Then you can tackle other barriers.

Don't forget about your friends. Are there one or two friends who could help you meet the goals you are focusing on right now? Be sure to explain how this will help you manage your weight and diabetes.

Skills and Goals dealing with barriers

- ▶ Identify barriers to meeting my RED food and GREEN activity goals.
- ▶ Keep all my resources in mind while making plans to overcome barriers.
- ▶ Re-do any plan that doesn't seem to work

After you get your goals clear, identify the barriers to success and begin using your problem-solving skills.

Notes to myself—some things I want to keep in mind this week:

Overcoming Barriers

Problem-Solve to Overcome Barriers—Example

Tyrone's Goal: Eat fewer RED foods at school lunch

Step 1: Identify the barriers On the line below, Tyrone listed his all of his barriers to success.

My friends eat RED foods and I like RED foods

Step 2: Brainstorm solutions He identified his resources and then thought about how each of his resources could be used in a possible plan.

Step 3: Compare solutions Then he compared each of his solutions by listing the pros and cons of each possible plan.

My Resources	Possible Plans	Pros	Cons
1. My friends	1. Ask for support	1. They would like to help	1. We do not always eat together
2. New friends	2. Sit by people who eat healthy and talk to them	2. I could meet new people	2. This might be scary at first
3. GREEN foods at school	3. Check the menu ahead of time	3. There are a lot of fruits and vegetables I like at school	3. The foods I like are not always available at school
4. GREEN foods I could bring	4. Bring GREEN food I like	4. We have lots of GREEN food at home I could eat	4. I would have to remember to bring foods from home

Step 4: Make a plan using one or more of your resources Next, Tyrone made a plan using his resources.

Ask friends for support

Step 5: When did you use your plan? He kept a record of the times and days he stuck to his plan.

All week

Step 6: How did your plan work? Finally, he thought about how his plan worked.

Very well. Friends sat by me and reminded me to eat healthy.

I only ate RED foods once!

Problem-Solve to Overcome Barriers

Now, identify your own goal. Then, follow the steps for problem-solving below.

Your Goal: _____

Step 1: Identify the Barriers On the line below list your barriers to success. There may be more than one barrier.

Step 2: Brainstorm Solutions First, list all of your resources. Then, think about how each resource could be used in a possible plan.

Step 3: Compare Solutions To compare solutions, list the pros and cons of each possible plan.

My Resources	Possible Plans	Pros	Cons
1.	1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.	4.

Step 4: Make a plan using one or more of your resources.

Step 5: When did you use your plan?

Step 6: How did your plan work?

Overcoming Barriers

- ▶ A barrier is a roadblock to success. It can be anything that gets in the way of healthy eating or doing physical activity.
- ▶ Barriers change over time. They change as you change. That's why you need to reassess them often.

What should I do if my plan doesn't work?

1. Don't let yourself get discouraged if things don't work out right away.
2. Try to figure out what went wrong. Were there barriers you did not expect? The more clearly you see a barrier, the more likely you will be able to solve it.
3. Problem-solve and try again.

The 6 steps in problem-solving

First set a small goal. Then:

1. Identify the specific barrier.
2. Brainstorm solutions. Think of as many resources and plans as you can.
3. Compare solutions.
4. Make a plan.
5. Put the plan to work.
6. Evaluate how the plan worked. Did your plan help overcome barriers? If not, make another plan that will.



Keep all your resources in mind.

- ▶ Ask yourself: *What can help me deal with barriers? Who can help?* If you can identify all your resources, it will be easier to think of plans that might work.
- ▶ Think about the Activity Reference Guide, the Food Reference Guide, Family Meetings, Lifestyle Logs, Weight Graphs, the TLP Reward system, weekly schedules, your PAL, family, and friends. What has helped you in the past? Who could support you now?

SPECIAL FOCUS

What are the biggest barriers right now?

1. Take barriers in order. Start with the ones that give you the best chance for success right now. Then get after the others.
2. Break your 4 key goals into smaller, specific goals. What do you want to get done now? What makes it hard to limit RED foods at night? To increase GREEN activity when you have homework?

