

Lesson Three: The Path to Change

Small Steps to Health and Wealth Lesson Plan

Learning Objectives

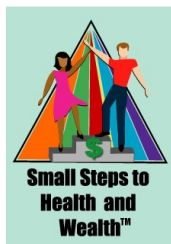
Participants will:

- * Understand the importance of monitoring their progress, both positive and negative.
- * Learn how to track personal progress for both health- and wealth-related behavior change goals.
- * Learn strategies to overcome barriers and obstacles that may arise as they change behaviors.
- * Learn appropriate rewards as positive reinforcement for behavior change that can be used at various milestones.

Behavioral Objectives

Participants will:

- * Use a recommended system to measure their progress toward stated health and/or wealth goals.
- * Set up support and reward strategies to overcome obstacles as they arise.



Portions of this lesson were adapted and excerpted from the following book: O'Neill, B. and Enslie, K. (2006). *Small Steps to Health and Wealth*. Ithaca, NY: NRAES. For additional information about purchasing *Small Steps to Health and Wealth*, visit www.nraes.org.

Introduction

The Path to Change focuses on change implementation and reducing barriers to change. Once someone begins to change behavior, their commitment will be tested in a variety of ways. Change is seldom easy and often people will encounter barriers to change from themselves and from others who may be impacted by change. For example, taking time to exercise may change a family's routine and changing foods offered at dinner may not sit well with everyone in a family. Increasing income may mean more time spent at work and less time for the family, while reducing expenses often requires sacrifices from everyone in a household.

Content and Background

Read the relevant sections of the SSHW Handbook for background information:

Review the various strategies for overcoming obstacles. Remember that encountering obstacles and experiencing lapses are part of the process that people go through when trying to change behaviors. These will test anyone's level of commitment.

Monitor Progress and Reward Success (23) - Keeping track of your progress helps you to assess whether you are on track to your goals. It also allows you to know when you reach certain progress points or milestones. Reaching these milestones should be celebrated to reinforce that your behavior change is meant to improve your overall well being.

Expect Obstacles (24) - Obstacles and lapses are a usual and normal part of the process of making behavior changes. Obstacles include anything that blocks a person from taking positive steps toward their health and wealth goals. Obstacles may cause a relapse to old habits. Relapse prevention includes clearly identifying obstacles and developing specific plans to overcome them.



Estimated Time:

60 minutes

Pre-Class Preparation

- Review the readings.
- Prepare anecdotes to share with the group related to one or more of the strategies.
- Create an example of how one might track their progress and display on a transparency or an Excel spreadsheet.

Materials Needed

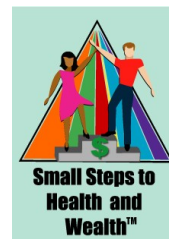
- Workbook for participants
- Copies of “Plan for Setbacks” and “Tracking Your Progress” that can be in-class activities
- Computer with Excel
- Graph paper
- Stickers for milestone markers
- LCD projector for computer
- Case study for obstacles exercise

Activities

- Plan for Setbacks
- Tracking Your Progress

“If we don’t
change, we
don’t grow. If
we don’t grow
we are not
really living.”

- Gail Sheehy



Plan for Setbacks

After committing to change, the next step is think through specific action plans to meet goals, and be mindful of obstacles that may come up. Obstacles can come from ourselves, our family and friends, our work, our environment, and even external sources such as changes in the economy or interest rates. It is important to spend time thinking some of these through. Obstacles involving personal relationships will likely require some level of communication to make other(s) aware of your intentions. If they know of your desire to change and if your behavior change is healthy, then those who truly support you will support your efforts. If someone important to you is unwilling to be supportive, it will likely require serious evaluation of their role during your transition. This activity is designed to assist you in brainstorming the possible obstacles and strategies for managing them.

Participants should complete the worksheet on their own (although discussing possible strategies as a group is recommended if time permits and group dynamic is respectful).

You can use the following case study to keep this exercise less personal. People may be frustrated as they consider that people they love could discourage their attempts to make positive changes.

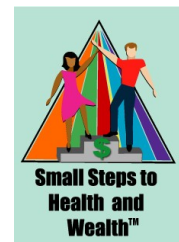
Case Study: Cathy Johnson, 31, mother of two boys, ages 8 and 10 years, would like to lose 20 pounds over the next year on the advice of her physician who is concerned about her health. In exploring her environment, she found several things that may affect her progress toward her weight loss goal. Her sons currently eat lots of snacks, many of which Cathy eats as well. Unfortunately, many of these snacks, such as cookies, candy, chips, and snack cakes, are high in calories. In addition, Cathy will visit her family for Thanksgiving and Christmas, when there is always a feast for several days.

Discussion:

1. What are the potential barriers that Cathy is facing?
2. Select one barrier and brainstorm potential solutions.
3. Which solution would be the one that you would choose? Why?

**“Yesterday I
dared to
struggle. Today
I dare to win.”**

**-Bernadette
Devlin**



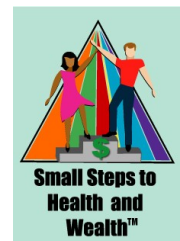
Tracking your Progress

It is much easier to maintain any type of behavior change if we see it making a difference or see that progress is being made. Making a graph or plot of progress can be helpful. This is a basic X-Y plot. X is the horizontal line, Y is the vertical line. The horizontal line is time, in weeks. The Y axis is the behavior or outcome the participants will be measuring such as body weight, time spent in physical activity, money spent, debt level, account balances. They can use Worksheet 37 or graph paper for this activity. Encourage participants to set small milestones throughout the process and to reward themselves with a program-appropriate reward (NOT an ice cream sundae or spending spree at the mall, for example) each time they reach a milestone. Have them make a list of small rewards that will reinforce their positive behaviors while providing incentives for them to continue their efforts. This can be a fun component of the activity as people share with each other their lists of rewards that would be effective positive reinforcement for each of them.

On the graph paper, have them indicate certain milestones they want to reach using stickers or a symbol that makes sense to them.

Weight (lbs)	198	X	X						
	195			X					
	192				X	X			
	189						X		
	186							X	
	183*								*
	180								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Weeks									
* I will go to the beach for my day off when I reach this weight in week 8.									

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