

The Road to Health Toolkit

User's Guide

How to Prevent or Delay Type 2 Diabetes in Your Community:
A Resource for Community Health Workers



**Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention**
National Center for Chronic
Disease Prevention and
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Introduction

Welcome to the *Road to Health Toolkit*. The toolkit was updated in 2021 to reflect the most current science on preventing type 2 diabetes and supporting behavior change. It has also been enhanced to support delivery on virtual platforms.

The toolkit provides materials to start a community outreach program to help people prevent or delay type 2 diabetes. It is designed for community health workers (CHWs) who serve Black or African American persons and Hispanic or Latino persons. In the United States, Black or African American persons and Hispanic and Latino persons are at a higher risk than the general population for developing type 2 diabetes. For more information, please see the National Diabetes Prevention Program, [Who is at Risk for Prediabetes and Type 2 Diabetes?](#) Although the *Road to Health Toolkit* was designed for people from these racial and ethnic minority groups—it can appeal to any audience.

As demonstrated in the National Diabetes Prevention Program (National DPP) lifestyle change program (LCP), type 2 diabetes can be prevented or delayed by making lasting lifestyle changes. While this toolkit is not a substitute for the LCP, it can help motivate people with prediabetes to take steps to improve their health and join a type 2 diabetes prevention program. CHWs play a vital role in the health of their communities. With the use of the *Road to Health Toolkit*, they can share an important and hopeful message with their communities: type 2 diabetes can be prevented or delayed in people at high risk for the disease. This toolkit can help CHWs teach people that diabetes does not have to be their destiny and it can help lead them on “the road to health.”

“Se hace camino al andar.”
 (“You make your road by walking it.”)

— Antonio Machado

About the User’s Guide

This User’s Guide describes all the resources in the toolkit and suggests ways to use them to promote type 2 diabetes prevention. Read the User’s Guide first, followed by the Group Leader Guide, Participant Guide, and then the Activities Guide. The Evaluation Guide can help you get feedback from your participants to be sure you are meeting their needs. Decide which parts of this toolkit will work best for your community. Use the toolkit to connect with the people you serve and to support them as they make healthier choices. Be creative. You may have some new ideas for activities or lessons as you look over the materials.

Refer to the Additional Information section on page 13 for suggestions on how to prepare for situations that may arise in your sessions.

If you have any questions or concerns about a topic related to nutrition or physical activity, ask a health care professional such as a dietitian, nurse, or doctor for help.

Virtual Delivery Tips

You can conduct your *Road to Health Toolkit* sessions virtually, if needed. This means conducting sessions in real time, with the CHW present in one location and a group or participant calling in or videoconferencing from other locations. Use the following tips to help you conduct your sessions virtually:

- Download any necessary videoconferencing software on your computer.

- Download a quick tip sheet guide from the web-conferencing tools' website and send to participants (optional).
- Access your virtual classroom and conduct a dry run of the session, if possible. Practice describing features you will use, including polling, whiteboard, breakout rooms, and chat.
- Prepare a presentation space in a room that is quiet and private with minimal background distractions.
- Use the screen share feature in the web-conferencing tool to display the Participant Guide or other materials to your group or participant.
- Set up the preferred delivery/pickup method for how participants will receive their Participant Guide and handouts such as:
 - o Mail a hard copy of materials.
 - o Provide instructions for accessing online materials on the [Road to Health Toolkit website](#).
 - o Email electronic copies.
- Set up a session invite with log in information and send to participants.
- Test all technology and applications to ensure they are working properly, including video and audio.
- Encourage participants to keep their camera on during the session to maintain a sense of community.
- Demonstrate and explain how to use the web-conferencing features, such as the whiteboard, chat feature, raising hand feature, and screen share.
- Remind participants to mute their lines when other people are talking to decrease background noise.
- Ensure participants include their names in the web conferencing tool.

Safety Tips

The *Road to Health Toolkit* promotes incorporating regular physical activity into your routines. Here are some general physical activity precautions and safety tips to communicate to your group or participant:

- If you have health concerns, you should talk to your doctor before you start any activity program.
- Warm up before being active and cool down afterwards.
- Be active at the proper intensity, with the correct amount of weight for your current level of strength.
- Perform activities to the point at which it would be difficult to do another repetition.
- Don't perform activities quickly. They should be done in a slow, controlled motion.
- Breathe regularly throughout each activity.
- If you are not well enough to be active, take a break and see how you feel the next day.
- Try athletic shoes with good support, such as walking, running, or cross-training sneakers.
- Never wear ankle weights or hold dumbbells while walking or doing other aerobic exercises such as biking or jogging.

Be sure to review Are You Ready to Get Active? and Be Active, Be Safe with participants on pages 28-29 in the Appendix of the Activities Guide before beginning activities that include physical activity in order help participants to avoid injury. It will also help them to decide whether to talk with their health care provider before they get active.

Toolkit Components

The *Road to Health Toolkit* consists of the following components:

- The **Group Leader Guide** is the most important component of the toolkit. It discusses type 2 diabetes prevention and is delivered through the story of an adult brother and sister with diabetes in their family who teach people how type 2 diabetes can be prevented or delayed.
- The **Participant Guide** is a resource for your group or participant. It should be used in conjunction with the Group Leader Guide since its lessons and topics align with the Group Leader Guide.
- The **presentation slides** are another version of the Participant Guide to be used as a presentation tool to display the visuals for each topic during a lesson.
- The **Activities Guide** suggests specific activities to promote making healthy food choices and physical activity among your participants.
- The **Evaluation Guide** helps you plan how to get feedback from your participants and use the information to plan future sessions.
- **Videos and podcasts** feature original music and music videos that you can use to encourage and engage your group or participant in physical activity and movement. A list of the podcasts is located on the [Road to Health Toolkit website](#).
- **Tools and worksheets** that support the lessons in the Group Leader Guide and Participant Guide, as well as the activities in the Activities Guide, are located on the [Road to Health Toolkit website](#). For example, you can adapt and use the slide deck to guide your online lessons, share interactive posters, or provide participants with food and activity tracking logs.

Group Leader Guide and Participant Guide

The Group Leader Guide and Participant Guide are the main teaching tools in this Toolkit and should be used together to teach and deliver the key messages in the toolkit. The other tools in the toolkit were created to help support the use of the Group Leader Guide and Participant Guide.

The Group Leader Guide and Participant Guide feature the fictional story of a brother and sister whose family is touched by type 2 diabetes. Because of their family history, they too are at risk for developing type 2 diabetes. In the English version, the characters are named Angela and Ray. In the Hispanic/Latino version, the characters are named Camila and Jorge, who are joined in telling their story by Mariana, Camila's teenage daughter.

Often people better remember key messages if they are delivered in a story. The Group Leader Guide and Participant Guide tell the story of an adult brother and sister on their “road to health.” They tell how they learned about type 2 diabetes prevention and began their “road to health,” and they describe how they made small changes in their habits to reduce the risk of getting type 2 diabetes. The key messages on type 2 diabetes prevention are shared by the story's characters. The “skeleton” of the story is provided. Your job is to “flesh it out”—to make the story real to your participants. Don't be afraid to add more details and to draw from your own experiences in order to bring type 2 diabetes prevention to life. The important thing is to tell a story your participants can relate to and help them see the changes they can make in their own lives.

How to Use the Group Leader and Participant Guides

You will teach the story using the lessons and topics contained within the Group Leader Guide and Participant Guide. Participants can follow along using the Participant Guide, or you can display the presentation slides on a screen. These lessons and topics are listed below:

Lesson 1: Type 2 Diabetes is Preventable, and Losing Some Weight Can Help

The story of a road to health begins by describing a healthy future without type 2 diabetes. It also explains the disease and its risk factors and describes how the disease can be prevented or delayed.

- Topic 1: Preventing Type 2 Diabetes—Meeting Angela and Ray
- Topic 2: Diabetes Affects Various Body Organs
- Topic 3: Type 2 Diabetes Risk Factors and How the Disease Can Be Prevented

Lesson 2: Making Healthy Food Choices

This lesson focuses on food and nutrition basics and describes how the characters in the story have used these approaches to adapt their eating habits.

- Topic 1: Reading Food Labels
- Topic 2: Limit Unhealthy Fats
- Topic 3: New Routines for Eating Well Away from Home
- Topic 4: Using the “Traffic Light” Method to Label Foods
- Topic 5: Understanding Proper Portion Sizes
- Topic 6: A Healthy Approach to Carbs

Lesson 3: Increase Physical Activity

Participants learn about incorporating physical activity into their life and the benefits it has on their health and to prevent or delay type 2 diabetes. This lesson also describes how the characters in the story incorporate physical activity in their life and overcome their personal challenges.

- Topic 1: Getting Active
- Topic 2: Track Your Activity
- Topic 3: Challenges and Excuses
- Topic 4: Finding Time for Physical Activity

Lesson 4: Rewards and Goal Setting

Participants learn about rewards for a healthier lifestyle and setting goals. This lesson also reveals the personal rewards of adopting a healthy lifestyle for the characters in the story.

- Topic 1: Rewards of a Healthier Lifestyle—Setting Goals
- Topic 2: Summary of Key Points

The topics within each lesson are numbered, but you may choose them in any order that best suits your group or participant. It is, however, essential that you cover ALL four of these lessons and their topics because all the information is important in preventing type 2 diabetes. It is recommended that you talk about these lessons over multiple sessions. At least three sessions are needed for participants to have time to absorb the new information and to have a chance to try the new skills they have learned. Additional sessions can build upon these lessons by using the activities suggested in the Activities Guide.

For each topic, the Group Leader Guide contains a lot of information, including Background information, Key Points, and an Ask and Discuss section. Each session ends with a few questions you can ask to see if your participants retained the information you shared. You do not have to deliver all of the information in one session. You know your participants best. You choose how much they can handle at once. The purpose of this Toolkit is to help people change their routines and habits related to food and physical activity. Teach only as much as you need to get across key messages. You decide, based on the questions people ask and how much they appear to understand, how quickly you can cover the information. You may teach only a few key points during a session and return to the other key points at the next session. It helps to keep notes on what you covered in a session.

It is important that participants use and refer to the Participant Guide when you teach from the Group Leader Guide. The Participant Guide contains the visuals and key messages that go with each topic in a lesson. The visuals help in aiding understanding and can be used as a learning tool to initiate conversations. A topic's key message can be found at the bottom of each page in the Participant Guide. This key message is the "take home message" for your group or participant. If accessible, display an electronic version of the Participant Guide on a computer or projection screen.

Teaching Tips

Use the following teaching tips for helpful ideas and approaches for engaging participants and delivering messaging in the Group Leader Guide and Participant Guide.

When teaching about type 2 diabetes prevention...

- Ask the participants: What three things can you do to prevent or delay type 2 diabetes? Answer: Make healthy food choices, get at least 150 minutes (for example, 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week) of moderate-intensity physical activity a week and, if overweight, lose at least 5% of their starting weight or lose at least 4% of their starting weight and log an average of 150 minutes of activity each week, or lower their HbA1C by 0.2%. Explain that losing 4 to 5% of your starting weight means losing 4 to 5 pounds for every 100 pounds you weigh now. So, if you weigh 200 pounds, you would lose 8 to 10 pounds.
- Let participants know you will help them achieve those goals. You will travel the road to health together.

When teaching about healthy food choices...

- Encourage other ways to find out nutrition facts including computer apps, smartphone apps, and websites.
- Reinforce use of nutrition facts labels by having participants use the Food Comparison Sheet, located in the Appendix of the Activities Guide, to compare different food items. You can also plan ahead for participants to do Activity 7 - What's for Lunch, in the Activities Guide.
- When teaching about limiting unhealthy fats, use the visuals in the Participant Guide to discuss other ideas to cook in healthy ways to limit unhealthy fats. Encourage participants to try these ideas and report back how it went.
- When discussing healthy fat replacements or a healthier cooking method, provide participants with a list of foods and cooking methods (sour cream, creamy dressings, bacon, deep frying, cooking with butter, etc.). First, ask them to determine whether it is best to “reduce” or “avoid” the food or cooking method, and second, to suggest a healthy replacement. For example: Deep-fried chicken should be avoided. Alternatively, remove the skin and sauté it in olive oil.
- When discussing eating well away from home, introduce Restaurant Tips located in the Appendix of the Activities Guide, to give participants additional ways they can start new routines when eating out and choosing food at restaurants. It provides advice for planning ahead before eating out, making healthy swaps, and controlling portion sizes. You can also plan ahead for participants to do Activity 9: New Routines for Eating Well Away from Home, in the Activity Guide.
- Ask participants to use the Weekly Food Log or the Food Tracking Activity Log to track their food for a given amount of time. At the next session, ask participants to identify some things they can change.
- When you talk about food, bring the topic to life with the “traffic light” method on page 9 in the Participant Guide to learn more about this way of looking at food. Show participants how to label food before putting it away. Red is an occasional food (have these foods only once in a while and in very small portions), and green is an everyday food. Yellow foods should be eaten with caution, typically in smaller portions.
- Teach participants to use the Diabetes Plate Method to serve up meals with a healthy balance of vegetables, protein, and carbohydrates—without any counting, calculating, weighing, or measuring. Plan a healthy potluck as a group and have participants practice serving their food portions according to the Plate Method.
- To expand on learning about the amount of food that we eat, introduce measuring food as a means for controlling how much we eat. Caution participants on the ease and risk of overestimating serving sizes when you don't measure. Introduce How to Measure Your Food, located in the Appendix of the Activities Guide, as a resource for measuring food when you don't have time or the tools to measure

your food. Also, consider having participants complete Activity 3: Measuring Food on page 5 in the Activities Guide.

- When you discuss food choices and portion sizes when eating away from home, share [Choosing Healthy Foods on Holidays and Special Occasions: Buffet Table Tips for People with Diabetes](#) to help your group or participant overcome challenges when eating at buffets or social events where there are abundant drink and food choices. Although the resource is for people with diabetes, the strategies are useful for anyone trying to make healthy choices when eating away from home.
- When teaching about a healthy approach to carbohydrates, have your group or participant write down some of their favorite carbs. They should record how often they eat them and about how much they eat at a time. Then, let them decide if they need to make a healthy change. If so, have them write a healthy change or swap they will try.

*Use more than one method to teach about healthier eating. People learn in different ways. See the Activities Guide for additional ideas.

When teaching about physical activity...

- Ask participants to commit to at least 10 minutes of continuous activity (like dancing to two or three favorite songs or walking after dinner) three times a day until they have completed 30 minutes for the entire day. Participants can use the Activity Log located in the Appendix of the Activities Guide to record their activities for a week. Participants should also note how they felt before and after each activity. After a week, review the log. Praise any and all efforts. Suggest ways participants can move more. Challenge participants to be physically active longer or more often the following week.
- Encourage the use of fitness trackers to challenge participants to track activities and increase their daily “step rate.” Encourage them to set realistic goals. See the Activities Guide for activities on using fitness trackers.
- Suggest walking trails and community walks in the area to make it easier for everyone to fit in physical activity.
- Select and practice beginner strength training exercises to demonstrate for participants during the session. Refer to <https://www.nutrition.gov/topics/exercise-and-fitness/exercise-examples-and-videos> at USDA Nutrition.gov for a sample of exercise routines and videos.
- When teaching finding time for physical activity, show participants the visual on page 16 in the Participant Guide, then continue the discussion by having them share additional ideas to add physical activity to their regular routines.
- Identify common challenges from the group or participants for staying active over the long term. Brainstorm strategies for turning them into successes.

More Tips

In general:

- Praise any and all positive efforts that your participants make.
- Share something about your own struggle—in the past or daily— to maintain health and seek balance.
- Help participants remember that it takes time to make a habit, and it takes time to break a habit.
- Adapt topics to levels that participants can understand.
- Help participants identify people who can support them in their efforts. You might be someone they name!

- Focus on one habit at a time. At one session, focus on better choices at lunch. At the next session, suggest a new healthy habit, like walking for 15 minutes each morning.
- Send out the text messages between sessions to keep your participants engaged and motivated to keep trying new habits. These messages are in the Leader's Guide.

Activities Guide

This guide offers activities to involve participants in their efforts to eat better and be more active. Many of these activities come from CHWs working in the field. The Activities Guide appendix includes handouts, such as an activity log, food logs, and tip sheets that you can give to your participants.

How to Use This Tool

People learn by doing. The Activities Guide describes activities, such as games, you can use to teach your participants about various ways to prevent or delay type 2 diabetes including: eating healthier, being more physically active, and staying at a healthy weight. Use these activities with families, classes, at community health fairs, school field days, and other events.

Evaluation Guide

The Evaluation Guide is designed for facilitators who use the *Road to Health Toolkit* and want to learn participants' opinions about Road to Health sessions and how useful the information is to them.

How to Use This Tool

This guide gives you three easy-to-use tools that let you quickly collect feedback from your participants. This information will help you understand how well things are going, if you need to make any changes, and what those changes should be. The tools provided in the guide will help you improve your sessions and support your participants in reaching their health goals.

Videos and Podcasts

Podcasts, located on the [Road to Health Toolkit](#) website, contain music and videos that are a fun and engaging way to get participants moving and to teach them about preventing type 2 diabetes at the same time. The podcasts include:

- **Every Day Is a New Beginning** - an R&B gospel song inspired by community-based composers and singers.
- **Put on My Shoes** - a funky blues song that tells you to “keep on keepin’ on.”
- **Breathe In, Breathe Out** - a new hip-hop groove to get you moving and breathing healthier.

How to Use This Tool

Use these podcasts to inspire and motivate people to move more in everyday life. They can be used in any location or environment where people can safely exercise. Examples include the following:

- Health fairs and clinics
- Office spaces
- People’s homes
- Classrooms
- Community centers
- Exercise classes

Encourage your group or participant to save the podcast files to their computer or access them on their cell phone so that they can listen while exercising or when they need a boost of motivation.

Teaching Tips

Below are some tips for incorporating music into your program:

- Play a video or podcast at every session to get people up and moving.
- Play them in your office to encourage workers and visitors to take a 10-minute dance break.
- Share the links with participants, other workers, and physical education teachers to use.
- Ask community partners to play the video at their businesses and at special events. Partners may be based at:
 - o Shopping centers
 - o Government buildings
 - o Churches
 - o Grocery stores
 - o Restaurants
- Ask participants to find other music that inspires them to move. If done for at least 10 minutes, dancing counts as a mini-workout and is part of the day’s physical activity.

DISCLAIMER: Be sure to encourage your participants to consult a doctor or other health care professional before starting any physical activity program. Have your group or participant fill out Are You Ready to Get Active? located in the Appendix of the Activities Guide. Also, it is important to warm up at the start of an exercise session and cool down at the end. Refer to Be Active, Be Safe, located in the Appendix of the Activities Guide, for additional tips on exercising safely.

Additional Information

This section is intended to help you with potential situations that may arise in your program.

New Routines and Habits

Perhaps this is your first experience leading small-group discussions. Discussing new routines and habits one-on-one or with groups can bring unexpected questions and situations. Talking about how diabetes might affect one's life can open emotional issues. Asking people to come up with solutions to their own challenges can lead to frustration, denial, and even anger directed at you.

What should I do if participants don't want to admit that they need to make some lifestyle changes?

People who don't think they need to make changes might not listen to suggestions about what to do. This is often called the "precontemplation stage." While people in precontemplation aren't ready to take action, you can help them see benefits of lifestyle changes. Just thinking about making some changes is a big step for a person in precontemplation. Focus on activities the person likes to do. Ask the person if he or she can see a benefit that relates to this activity. You can prompt the person, if necessary. For example, you could say, "Many people find they have more energy when they start walking more. How would your day be different if you had more energy?"

What should I do if a participant has been able to make some change but still needs support?

You can help these people by finding out what positive and negative feedback they are receiving from family and friends. Help them see the benefits they are receiving as a result of the changes they have made.

Praise any change, no matter how small. Warn participants that lapses, such as overeating or skipping healthy routines, can happen and should be regarded as temporary stumbles, not disasters.

Facilities/Equipment

What should I do if I don't have a room where we can meet?

You don't need one. You can use this toolkit anywhere you usually work with people—in their homes, at a school or church classroom; even outdoors. The toolkit has many different activities and tools you can choose from to fit the setting where you teach.

What should I do if my group or participant cannot meet in person?

You can facilitate the lessons in the Group Leader Guide virtually by using a web-conferencing tool. Use the screen share feature in the virtual meeting tool to display the presentation slides or other tools in the toolkit for your group or participant to see. You may also adapt activities in the Activity Guide to be conducted individually or in a virtual setting. Refer to the Virtual Delivery Tips on page 1 in this guide for additional guidance.

Staying on Track

What should I do if the person bursts into tears?

Those tears needed to come out. It may be helpful to say, "Sometimes talking about diabetes means dealing with a lot of big emotional issues. Don't be afraid to cry. Crying is part of the healing process that lets you move forward." Don't brush aside these emotions. Give the person some time to talk about their feelings and experiences. Unless you are a trained mental health professional, however, do not attempt to offer mental health counseling yourself to the people you are working with using this toolkit. The amount of distress a person

is experiencing is difficult to gauge. Provide contact information for mental health services in your community and offer to help arrange follow up.

What should I do if people ask me questions about their personal health?

Direct the person to their health care provider. Don't fall into the trap of trying to give medical advice. That is not your role here or the purpose of this toolkit.

What should I do if a person is asking medical questions that I don't know the answers to?

If you don't know, don't guess. Don't give medical information. Tell the person (or group) that you don't know the answer but will try to find out and get back to them. Suggest the person consult a health care provider for personal medical questions.

What should I do if people are asking me about friends and family with alcohol and substance abuse problems?

How can I talk about preventing type 2 diabetes when people are struggling with these issues? People struggling with substance abuse, alcohol abuse, and mental health problems need help. Unless you are a trained substance abuse counselor, you cannot offer counseling advice. Find out what resources are available in your community. Recommend they seek help and offer to assist with making an appointment or contacting the community resource that provides substance abuse outreach. Dealing with substance abuse and mental health is beyond the scope of this toolkit.

What should I do if I don't think I can cover all of the lessons in the Group Leader Guide? Should I drop part of it?

All of the lessons in the Group Leader Guide and Participant guide are important. You don't need to teach them all in one session, though. In fact, it is better to teach over multiple sessions. That gives people time to use the information you gave and practice the skills you taught. Spread things out over time. It might be better to teach three 20-minute sessions than one 1-hour session. Use the activities in the Activities Guide to build on the information taught in the Group Leader Guide and Participant Guide.

What should I do if another CHW is taking over for me? How can we smooth the transition?

This is where good note-taking really helps. Review these with the new CHW so that they understand the individual or group's goals and needs. Be honest about which topics or concepts have not been covered and where trouble spots might be in knowledge, attitudes, or behaviors. If possible, tell the participant or group ahead of time about the transition and ask them for ideas on what would encourage positive group dynamics and progress.

Working with a Group

What should I do if people expect food at sessions like this, or if they bring food that's not healthy?

Food helps people feel more relaxed, and you do want a comfortable setting. Consider providing water or other sugarless drinks, fruit, vegetables and low-fat dip, or low-fat crackers and cheese. Pretzels are a lower fat choice than chips but still high in salt and not the best choice for people with high blood pressure. Consider discussing food choices with the group at the first session and ask that if people bring food to share, they choose only unprocessed or less processed healthy snacks.

What should I do if one person in the group is doing all the talking?

You can deal with this situation in a couple of ways. Sometimes the person who is talking a lot is bringing up good points. You may not want to stop him or her from talking, but you do want to make sure that everyone has a chance to speak. In that case, every once in a while, explain that you would like to go around the room and ask each person if he or she has anything to say on the topic being discussed. Or you can tell participants that you would like them to adopt some “ground rules” for the discussion (for example, that only one person speaks at a time, that there is to be no interrupting, and that all opinions are welcome).

Another “ground rule” might be that a person may speak for only 2 minutes at a time. Two minutes should be plenty of time for relating an opinion and even enough time to share most personal stories. The “2-minute rule” helps ensure that everyone will have enough time to speak, and that one person does not take over the discussion.

What should I do if one person has a negative attitude?

Call a break in the session and then speak to the person individually during the break. Two options for approaching this conversation are:

1. If you think that the person means well but is having trouble with control, ask them to help with the class. You can enlist the person’s help by asking him or her to take notes or distribute handouts. Use the person’s energy and goodwill to help you.
2. If the person is difficult and disruptive, ask them to keep comments brief because others in the group want to speak. Everyone should have an opportunity to speak, express their thoughts, and ask questions. Tell the disruptive person that if he or she cannot do this, you will have no choice but to ask them to leave.

Where can I get more information on diabetes?

For additional information on diabetes, you can visit CDC’s Diabetes webpage at <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/index.html>.

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