

## Living Well With Diabetes

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Diabetes can wear down a person's energy and well-being, but this does not have to happen. The purpose of this module is to help participants get to know each other and build rapport, while introducing the concepts of promoting self-confidence and resiliency in managing diabetes.

### By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Identify examples of past successes in their own life (not related to diabetes).
- Name at least three actions a person can take to manage type 2 diabetes and plan to take one or more of those actions in the next week.

### MODULE 1

 **DISCUSSION TIME**  
60 minutes

-  **OUTLINE**
1. Introductions
  2. Ground rules
  3. Successes activity
  4. Managing diabetes
  5. Family support

## ☆ KEY MESSAGES

1. People with diabetes can manage their condition by taking small steps toward their goals.

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2. It is important to have confidence and celebrate both big and small successes.

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3. Knowing their ABCs and having a plan for managing them can help people with diabetes maintain optimal health.

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4. Diabetes management is a team effort. Identifying one's personal support circle and being able to ask for help can make all the difference.

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## 🔗 CONNECTING THREADS

Connecting Threads are topics that can be incorporated into *New Beginnings* sessions depending on the goals and needs of your participants.

Recommended Connecting Threads:

- [Facilitating \*New Beginnings\* Online](#)
- [Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support Services](#)
- [Building Social Connections in Family and Community Circles](#)

## 🖱️ GOING VIRTUAL TIPS

- Take a few minutes at the beginning of the session to explain the features of the video teleconferencing platform and go over the ground rules for virtual sessions. For example:
  - Mute video or phone when not speaking
  - Say your name before speaking (especially on the phone)
  - Participants are not required to have or use a camera. They can submit photos of themselves instead. This may make group members more comfortable.
- Instead of pairing off participants into the activities of this module, use the breakout room feature of your video teleconferencing platform (if available) or go around the “room” and have each participant share with the whole group. See the [Connecting Thread: Facilitating \*New Beginnings\* Online](#) for ideas for adjusting activities for virtual groups.



## GOING VIRTUAL TIPS (CONTINUED)

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- The video stories for this module can be played by sharing your screen (and computer audio) through your video teleconferencing platform. Another option is to share the links to the videos with your group members by email before the session starts.
- The audio stories can be inserted into the [New Beginnings PowerPoint template](#) along with images that reflect the story.



## MATERIALS

Suggested stories for this module:

- [Jacquie's Story C](#): Jacquie talks about growing up with type 1 diabetes and how it affected her as a teenager and young adult. (Audio: about 6 minutes)
- [It Takes a Family](#): The Clayton family works together to support their elderly father, who has diabetes. (Video: about 5 minutes)

Handouts:

- [Steps to Help You Stay Healthy With Diabetes](#)
- [How to Help a Loved One With Diabetes When You Live Far Apart](#)

## BUILDING TRUST AND MAINTAINING PRIVACY

*New Beginnings* discussions ask participants to think and talk about their feelings about diabetes and the experiences they have had with the disease, both good and bad. This kind of sharing can make people feel uncomfortable. A *New Beginnings* discussion group should be a safe place where participants can express how they really feel and know that they will not be judged. They also need to know that what they share will not leave the group.

At the beginning of this first session (or as needed), ask the group to develop “ground rules” everyone can agree on.

Ground rules can cover:

- **Sharing information.** Everyone should have a chance to talk if they want. Group members should not judge or criticize other members. People should not give advice unless they have been asked for it.
- **Respect.** Everyone has a right to their opinion or beliefs. People can agree to disagree without being disrespectful.
- **Privacy.** Participants should not talk about what is shared by other participants outside of the group. Participants should only contact other participants outside of class if they have their permission to do so.
- **Other issues.** Groups can also set rules about taking calls and texting during the session, bringing children, or bringing healthy snacks.

Write or post the ground rules in a place in the room where everyone can see them. Ask the group if they have others to add. Remind group members about the ground rules at the beginning of each session.



**Before beginning, it is recommended that you talk about setting ground rules for the group.**

# Group Discussion

This discussion will provide an overview of the topics that will be discussed in *New Beginnings* and an introduction to diabetes management concepts.

## Introduction to Managing Your Diabetes

### GROUP LEADER INSTRUCTIONS

### TALKING POINTS AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



**SAY:**

Hello. My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I'd like to welcome you all here today for our group discussion on how diabetes affects people with the disease and their families.

Most of you are here because you want to get even better at managing your diabetes. And you may be looking for ways to find more help and support from friends, family, and other people in your life.

You've already taken an important step by being here today. Diabetes can be much easier to manage with the right support in place.



**ASK:**

So that we can start getting to know each other, let's go around the room and have everyone say their name and how long they've been diagnosed. Please also tell us the main reason you're here today. For example, is there a problem you want to solve or an issue you're facing?



**SAY:**

I'm glad that you're here to share your story and learn more about managing diabetes.

You're not alone in the goals and challenges you just brought up. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there are more than 34 million people in the United States with diabetes. Many of these people manage their diabetes successfully, and you can too.



**SAY:**

Over the next few sessions, you're going to leave with tools that can help you avoid complications and manage your disease. With help from loved ones, and a diabetes care and education specialist (offering diabetes self-management education and support (DSMES) services), each and every one of you can take charge and manage your diabetes.



ASK:

Before we go on, we need to establish some ground rules for the group. I've thought of three to get us started:

- **Sharing information.** Everyone should feel comfortable to share with the group and not be judged.
- **Respect.** We should respect each other, even when we disagree.
- **Privacy.** Please respect the privacy of what is said here. "What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas."

Are there any other ground rules we should add? *[Discuss any ideas and add as needed].*

Okay, great! We can always add others later if we feel they are needed.

Are there any questions at this point? If not, let's get started.



SAY:

I want us to talk for a few minutes about success. All of us have faced things throughout our lives that were tough for us, where we had to work hard to achieve something or overcome an obstacle.

For me, I think of *[name a thing you've accomplished in your personal life, unrelated to diabetes or health] or [another accomplishment]. Of course, sometimes I have small daily successes too, like [a small thing].* Whenever I am struggling with a new challenge and I'm getting frustrated, if I can bring some of these to mind, I can talk myself through the frustration to say, "You've got this. If you got through that, you can do this!"

Even if everything in your life isn't perfect, or even if a lot is not perfect, I know all of you have things you accomplished or got through that you can be proud of.



ACTIVITY:

Think-Pair-Share:

I'd like you now to pair up with another person and take a couple of minutes to reflect on your successes. I'd like everyone to think of at least one big success in your life. I also want you to think back over the last couple of days or the past week and think of one small success.

Talk with your partner now and help each other identify a big success and a smaller success, then be ready to share your partner's successes with the group.



ASK:

Who is ready to share a success with the group? Which pair?  
And who else?

*Ask each pair to share their big and small successes. It may be most effective to have the partner share about the other person—stories will also tend to be more concise when told by another person. Continue around the room.*



SAY:

Thank you all for sharing. Whether they are big or small successes, reflecting on these can help us when we are working toward success—and sometimes getting frustrated—with diabetes self-management.



ASK:

And you know the interesting thing about the big successes you mentioned, like *[name one or two big successes mentioned]*? They were all made up of small steps and small successes. Right?

For example, *[name of person]*, you mentioned *[success]*. What were a few of the small things you had to do to achieve that?



SAY:

We're going to shift our focus now to success around managing diabetes.

You all know that diabetes is a very serious disease. It has complications that can cause heart disease, kidney failure, amputations, blindness, impotence, and many more health conditions. Diabetes is a leading cause of death in the United States. And does anyone know what other disease—which is also a leading cause of death—is linked to diabetes? Heart disease. In fact, more people with diabetes die of heart disease than of any other cause.

You can avoid those complications and live a healthy life if you know the steps to take. A first step to success is educating yourself about how to manage your diabetes.



SAY:

Let's look at this handout [Steps to Help You Stay Healthy With Diabetes](#).

It outlines four steps that people with diabetes can take to manage their condition.

Now let's listen to Jacquie's story as we review the steps.



LISTEN:

[Jacquie's Story C](#) (Audio: about 6 minutes)



ASK:

What is the first step? What are some things Jacquie did to take this step?

- Why do you think learning about diabetes is important?
- How do you think it will help you? Where could you have a small success this week related to managing your diabetes?

*Consider writing participant ideas for things they could do this week on a flipchart. Then people can “borrow” good ideas for the week ahead if they wish. Also tell participants that being part of the group can be counted as step one.*



ASK:

What is the second step? The ABCs are **A1C**, which is a measure of your blood sugar over the last 3 months, **blood pressure, cholesterol**, and **smoking cessation**. Module 2 explores this topic more.

Managing your ABCs will help lower your chances of having a heart attack or stroke.



ASK:

What is the third step?

- Did you notice any actions that Jacquie took to manage her diabetes?
- What do you think made it easier for her? What made it harder?

We will spend time over the next few weeks talking about small steps that people with diabetes can take to manage their condition. We will also talk about how loved ones can help. In the meantime, is there a small step you could take this week?



ASK:

What is the fourth step?

- Do you remember anything Jacquie mentioned about getting routine care or talking about getting care from a health care provider?

During these sessions, we will talk about how to make the most of your appointments with your health care providers.

- Is there anything you could do or need to do this week to move forward with the health care you need?

**GROUP LEADER  
INSTRUCTIONS**

**TALKING POINTS AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

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**ASK:**

Great! We've collected a bunch of ideas here. Are there any that you've been putting off? I'd like you now to identify several ideas that you think could be priorities for you and that you are ready to work on. Take the number one thing on your list and make a plan:

- When will you do it?
- Where will you do it?
- What small steps do you need to make it happen?



**SAY:**

Now you've got a plan. I'd like each of you to follow this plan this week. Next week, we'll look back and see if we can count it among your successes, and if not, what we can do to change that.

All this week I want you to take note of your big and small successes around managing your diabetes. And next week [*or until the next session*], we'll celebrate successes and talk about troubleshooting challenges.

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## Building or Rebuilding Your Circle of Support

**GROUP LEADER  
INSTRUCTIONS**

**TALKING POINTS AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

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**SAY:**

Now that we've mentioned that support is critical for success, let's watch a video to get us started.



**WATCH:**

*Show the video*

[It Takes a Family](#) (Video: about 5 minutes)

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**ASK:**

*When the video is over, let participants comment if they look ready to talk.*

Let's take a few minutes to talk about what we just heard.

- How relatable is this family?
- What were some of the kinds of support that were mentioned for the father in this video?
- What kind of role do your family and friends play right now in your diabetes management? Who can share an example of support they have received?
- Was there an example of support mentioned in the video where you thought, "Yes—that's exactly what I need, but right now I don't feel I am receiving that"? What was it?



**ACTIVITY:**

I'd like each of you to take a piece of paper and think for a moment. Who are the people in your support circle right now?

Write down their names.

Now talk for a moment with your partner from the earlier activity. What kinds of support do you get from your circle now, and what do you need?



**SAY:**

Let's look at this handout: [How to Help a Loved One With Diabetes When You Live Far Apart](#).

Just as there are four steps that a person with diabetes can take to manage their condition, there are four steps loved ones can take to help.

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ASK:

- What is the first step?
  - What are some examples of this from the story?
  - Why is it important for loved ones to learn about diabetes?
- What is the second step?
  - Did you notice any examples of this in the story?
- What is the third step?
  - Did you notice the ways the characters in the story talked about what they needed?
  - Why can it be difficult for a person with diabetes to talk about what they need with loved ones?
- What is the fourth step?
  - What are some things family members did to help in the story?
- Other questions:
  - What support does your circle provide now?
  - What additional support can they provide?
  - How can your support circle help you in taking some of the small steps toward success we identified earlier?
  - Who can you talk to this week?
  - What support will you ask for or be willing to accept this week?



SAY:

On the handout, you will see a place to list ways that loved ones can help. This week, I'd like you to think about who else might be in your support circle and how they can help—especially with the small steps for managing your diabetes that we discussed earlier.

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## CLOSE THE SESSION

- Take final questions.
- Thank the group for their participation.
- Explain the at-home activity, if applicable.
- Remind participants about the next session. Ask if they have specific questions or issues they would like addressed.
- Ask participants to do the session evaluation.

### AT-HOME ACTIVITY

- Ask participants to review the [Steps to Help You Stay Healthy With Diabetes](#) handout, complete the section on goals, and take at least one small step this week. They can then report back on their success or get help in troubleshooting a different step next week.

OR

- Ask participants to review the [How to Help a Loved One With Diabetes When You Live Far Apart](#) handout and make a list of their support circle of family, friends, or other loved ones who could offer some of the types of support suggested on the handout.

## RESOURCES

Use these resources to learn more about available support for managing diabetes.

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):
  - [Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support \(DSMES\) Services](#)
  - [Living with Diabetes](#)
- Association of Diabetes Care & Education Specialists
  - [Resources for People Living with Diabetes](#)