


Session 14:

Make Social Cues Work *for* You.

Social cues: What other people say or do that affects your eating and activity.

Problem social cues:	Examples:
The sight of other people eating problem foods or being inactive.	
Being offered (or pressured to eat) problem foods or invited to do something inactive.	
Being nagged.	
Hearing complaints.	

Helpful social cues:	Examples:
The sight of other people eating healthy foods or being active.	
 Being offered healthy foods or invited to do something active.	
Being praised.	
Hearing compliments.	

When you respond to a social cue in the same way, you build a **habit**. The other person has *also* learned a habit.

This makes social cues even harder to change than other cues.

To change problem social cues:

1. Stay away from the cue, if you can.

Example: Move to a different room.

2. Change the cue, if you can.

Discuss the problem with the other person.
Brainstorm options.



Tell the other person about your efforts to lose weight and be more active.

Ask others to:

- Praise you for your efforts and
- Ignore your slips.

This is KEY to your success.

3. Practice responding in a more healthy way.

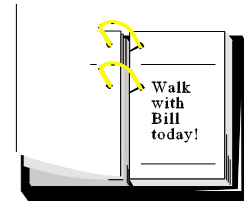
Say “No” to food offers.
Show others you know they mean well.
Suggest something they can do to help you.

Example: “No, thanks. But I’d love a glass of ice water.”

Remember, it takes time to change habits.

To add helpful social cues:

- Spend time with people who are active and make healthy food choices.
- Put yourself in places where people are active.
- Set up a regular “date” with others to be active.
- Ask your friends to call you to remind you to be active or to set up dates to be active.
- Bring a low-fat/calorie food to share when you go to a dinner party.
- Be the first to order when you eat out at a restaurant.
- Be social by doing something active. Take a walk and talk.
- Others:





Who could provide support for you?

For healthy eating: _____

For being more active: _____

What could they do to help you? Here are some ideas.



Ways to help me eat healthy:

- Serve low-fat/calorie foods for meals.
- Eat low-fat/calorie foods when I'm nearby.
- Don't tempt me with problem foods as a reward or gift.
- Clear the table and put food away as soon as the meal is over.
- Help with cooking, shopping, or cleaning up after meals.
- Don't offer me second helpings.
- Encourage me to cook new foods.
- Praise my efforts to eat healthier foods.
- Other: _____

Ways to help me be more active:

- Go for a walk with me. Or do other physical activities with me.
- Plan social events around being active.
- Compromise when my being active conflicts with your schedule.
- Praise me when I do my scheduled activity. Don't remind me when I don't.
- Babysit for me so I can take a walk.
- Set up a regular date with me to be active.
- Encourage me to go out for a walk when I'm debating whether or not to go.
- Try to achieve and maintain the Lifestyle Balance goals with me.
- Other: _____

Social cues are powerful at social events.

Social events:

- Upset our routine.
- Challenge us with unique food and social cues.
- May involve habits that have developed over many years and so can be very powerful.



To handle social events, problem solve. Brainstorm your options. Some ideas:

Options:	Examples:
Plan ahead.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat something before the event. • Plan your meal in advance. • Budget your fat grams ahead of time. Plan to eat the best (in small portions) and leave the rest. • Bring a tasty, low-fat dish to share.
Stay away from problem cues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stand as far away as you can from the table with the food. Keep your hands busy with a glass of water, coffee, tea, or diet soda. • Watch the alcohol. It lowers your will power and increases appetite. • Clear the table as soon as possible. Put the food away.
Change problem cues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss your goals with your family, friends, guests, host or hostess. • Ask others to praise your efforts and ignore your slips.
Respond to problem cues in a more healthy way.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice a polite, but firm, “No, thank you.” • Suggest something else they can do to help you. “No thanks, but I’d love a glass of ice water.”
Add helpful cues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve healthy foods or bring some to share. Use low-fat products to lower the fat in favorite recipes. Try some new, low-fat recipes. • Ask a friend or family member for support (split dessert with you, take a walk together, offer you healthy food choices). • Plan things to do that are active and don’t involve food.



Describe a social cue that's a *problem* for you. _____

Pick one idea from this session for changing that social cue. Choose one that is likely to work and that you can do.

Make a positive action plan.

**Problems
can be solved.**

I will: _____

When? _____

I will do this first: _____

Roadblocks that might come up: _____ I will handle them by: _____

I will do this to make my success more likely: _____

How can we help you?



Describe a *positive* social cue you'd like to add to your life.

Pick one idea from this session for adding that social cue. Choose one that is likely to work and that you can do.

Make a positive action plan.

**Problems
can be solved.**

I will: _____

When? _____

I will do this first: _____

Roadblocks that might come up:	I will handle them by:
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

I will do this to make my success more likely:

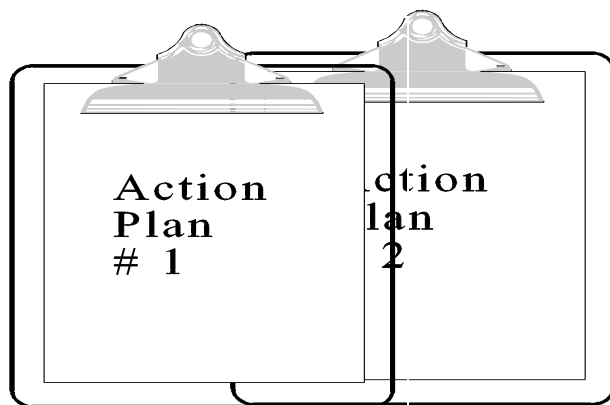
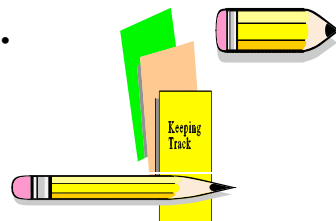
How can we help you?



To do next week:

I will:

- Keep track of my weight, eating and activity.
- Try my two action plans for making social cues work for me.



- Answer these questions:

→ Did my action plans work? _____

→ If not, what went wrong? _____

→ What could I do differently next time? _____
