



# Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support

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Module 8  
Problem Solving  
Revised July 2024

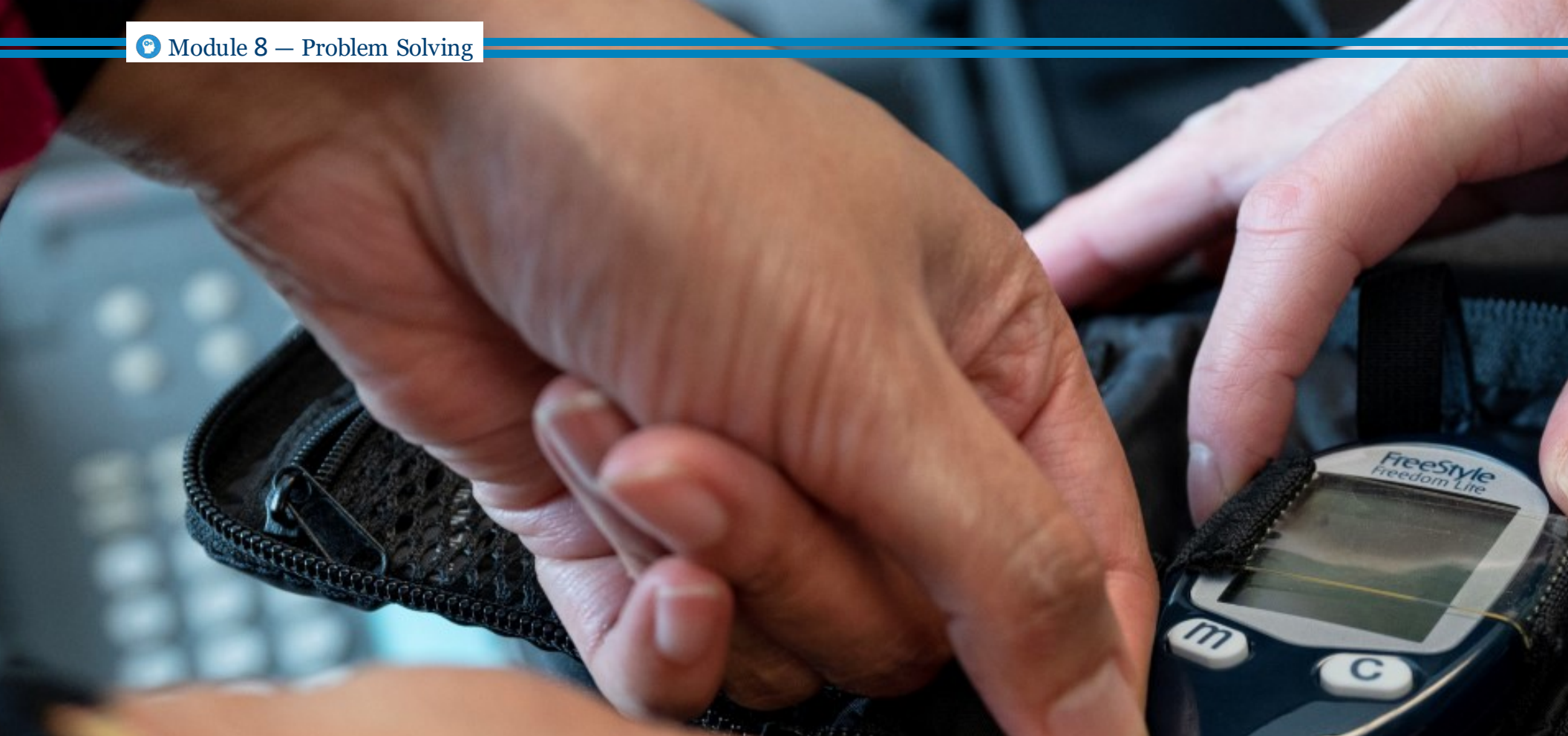
**VA**



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Veterans Health Administration



U.S. Department of Defense



## In This Module You Will:

- Verbalize barriers that interfere with diabetes self-management behaviors.
- Learn and apply techniques to help solve or remove barriers to diabetes self-management.
- Demonstrate where to find resources and support to help manage your diabetes.
- Create a personal plan to help manage your diabetes in the future.

## What is Problem Solving?

Problem solving is a complex, ongoing process of working through barriers in a logical way to find and implement solutions.

This is the ability to learn from past experiences, refer to the medical team or other valid resources, and use problem solving tools to effectively create solutions.

Finding and implementing solutions is a self-management skill that can be used throughout your journey with diabetes.

Problem solving can be applied to Monitoring (Module 2), Healthy Coping (Module 3), Taking Medications (Module 4), Healthy Eating (Module 5), Being Active (Module 6), and Reducing Risk (Module 7).

## What is something you feel you are doing well?

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## Problem Solving Process

**Recognize a problem.** This is the first step in the problem solving process. It involves identifying potential issues and challenges that can cause barriers.

**Brainstorm.** This step involves exploring the problem and generating new ideas. Consider involving your diabetes support team in this process.

**Identify ways to solve the problem.** Think about every possible solution and its effectiveness. Look at the problem in different ways. Don't just take your first idea.

**Select and implement a solution.** Choose a solution and then try it out.

**How did it go?** In this step, review and evaluate how it went. Was the desired outcome achieved. If it did not go well or the outcome was not what you expected, start the problem solving process over.

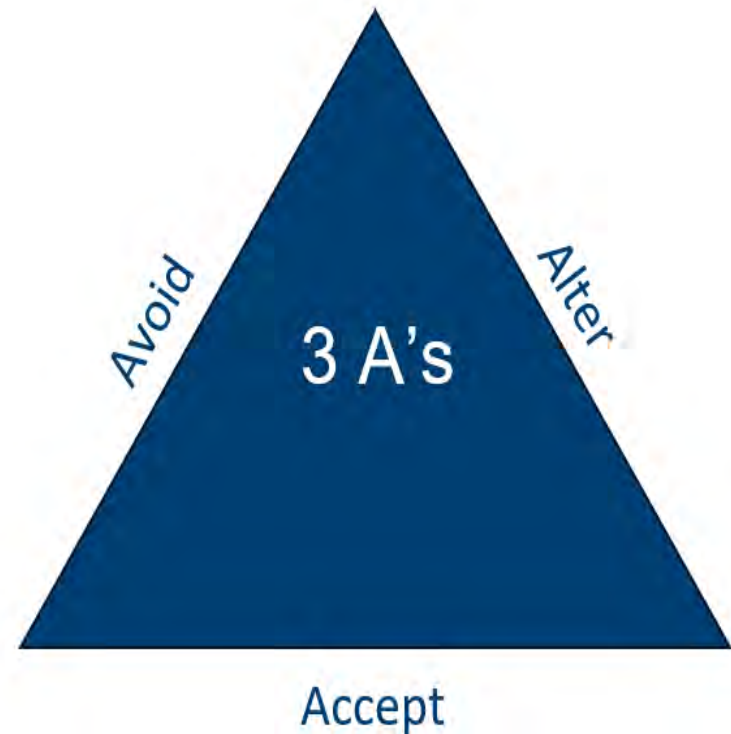


## Approaches to Problem Solving

If you use avoidance when faced with a problem, you may be trying to escape or distract yourself from dealing with difficult feelings or situations. In more severe cases, there might be underlying anxiety or depression. Contact your healthcare provider or team if you need professional help.

Are there times when you should embrace the situation or problem and stop trying to fix it or demand things to be different? Although you may feel like you have failed, the opposite is quite true. Acceptance can be a powerful tool. Sometimes stepping back is the best way in that situation to solve the problem. In the long run, total acceptance can mean less emotional suffering and burnout.

If you alter or reframe problems as questions, this can shift your focus from challenges and barriers to potential solutions. By changing your mindset, this may allow you to brainstorm and come up with potential ways to solve problems.



How do you approach problems?

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## Life Changes or Transitions

Transitions in life can be exciting, stressful, and challenging. Leaving the military for civilian life, moving to a new location, or retiring from a job are all examples of life changes that you might encounter.

Regardless how challenging transitions in life are, your healthcare team will support you along the way. There are many resources available to make these life changes easier.



### Do you have an app that has helped you or that you are thinking about trying?

There are many apps available to assist with tracking glucose, medication, blood pressure, physical activity, body weight, and food intake.



VA Mindfulness Coach



VA MOVE! Coach



VA Insomnia Coach



Ask the Pharmacist



Live Whole Health



Annie for Veterans



Navy Operational Fitness and Fueling



## Mindfulness Coach

<https://mobile.va.gov/app/mindfulness-coach>



Mindfulness Coach helps Veterans, Service members and others learn how to practice mindfulness. Mindfulness means paying attention to what is going on in the present moment, without passing judgement on it.

The App provides a self-guided training program to help you understand and adopt a simple mindfulness practice.

Mindfulness Coach offers a library of information about mindfulness, 12 audio-guided mindfulness exercises, and a growing catalog of additional exercises. The App also offers goal-setting and tracking, a mindfulness mastery assessment to help track your progress over time, customizable reminders, and access to other support and crisis resources.



## VA MOVE! Coach

<https://mobile.va.gov/app/move-coach>



MOVE!® Coach is an easy to use educational program for Veterans, service members, families, and others who want to lose weight. This App features 16 self-management modules. Each module helps to build weight management skills like healthy eating and being active. It is recommended to complete one module each week.

MOVE!® Coach uses tools that allow you to track your weight and the progress you are making towards achieving your goals.







## VA Insomnia Coach

<https://mobile.va.gov/app/insomnia-coach>



The insomnia coach app was created for everyone, including Veterans and Service members, to help manage insomnia. The app is based on Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I).

The app features a guided, weekly training plan to help you track and improve sleep, tips for sleeping and personal feedback about your sleep, an interactive sleep diary to help you keep track of daily changes and tools to help you get your sleep back on track.

**Go to: [www.mobile.va.gov](http://www.mobile.va.gov)**



## Ask a Pharmacist

<https://mobile.va.gov/app/ask-a-pharmacist>



Ask a Pharmacist enables you to access information about VA pharmacies and medications easily—with the comfort of knowing the information is valid and from trusted sources. If you have a verified My HealtheVet account (credentials for VA's personal health record), you can link to VA pharmacy and Secure Messaging services via the app, allowing you to quickly go to your personal medication and health information as well as learn about pharmacy-related topics.

This App can help you find out what services My HealtheVet Pharmacy offers, learn how to read prescription labels and identify pills by sight, read information from VA trusted medication resources and find out how VA pharmacies operate and locate a nearby facility.



## Live Whole Health

<https://mobile.va.gov/app/live-whole-health>



This app is an easy to use tool created for Veterans and others who are ready to take the next step in their Whole Health journey. Whole Health is VA’s holistic approach to care that supports your health and well-being. Whole Health centers care around what matters to you, not what is the matter with you. With this app, you can fill out your personal health inventory, set goals, and learn more about Whole Health.

The Live Whole Health App is not meant to replace professional care.



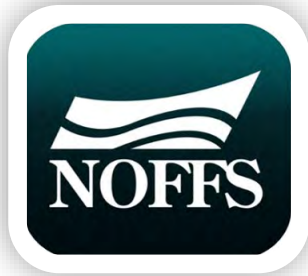
## Annie for Veterans

<https://mobile.va.gov/app/annie-veterans>



Annie is a VA text messaging service that empowers Veterans to take an active role in their health care by sending various automated self-care reminders. Messages you receive from Annie can include reminders to take your medication, tips for reducing stress, instructions to prepare your health care appointments, and more. Annie can also send general broadcast messages from your VA medical center or on topics of interest to you.

The primary benefit of Annie is the ability to receive many different types of self-care reminders to improve your health. While Annie is primarily a text messaging service, Annie for Veterans also features an online version through an internet browser.



## NOFFS APP

<https://www.navyfitness.org/fitness/noffs-training/noffs-resources-and-education/noffs-series-downloads>



DOD has an app designed to provide a human performance training resource. Navy Operational Fitness and Fueling System (NOFFS) is focused on injury prevention while obtaining positive performance outcomes.

The exercises used in the NOFFS program replicate the activities warfighters conduct in their operational duties like lifting, pushing, pulling, and carrying. NOFFS is a complete fitness package. It provides fueling strategies for weight loss, maintenance, or gain and assists with addressing and preventing common aches and pains.

Website also available at: <https://www.navyfitness.org/fitness/noffs-training>



211.org

<https://www.211.org/>



211 is a way to get help with paying bills, disaster recovery, healthcare expenses, mental health, substance use, and food programs and benefits.

Specialists at 211 can link callers directly to an agency or a community organization that can help with basic human needs like food and clothing, shelter, rent, and utility assistance.

To find out whether 211 services are offered in your area, visit 211.org or connect directly by text.

## VA Educational Classes

### Healthy Teaching Kitchen

The Healthy Teaching Kitchen (HTK) program provides Veterans with nutrition knowledge, cooking skills, and guided practice to build confidence in cooking at home with healthy, minimally processed foods.

VA facilities across the country offer HTK programs which teach Veterans and their support persons about food, nutrition, and how to prepare and store balanced, healthy dishes.

[www.nutrition.va.gov/Healthy\\_Teaching\\_Kitchen.asp](http://www.nutrition.va.gov/Healthy_Teaching_Kitchen.asp)



### Nutrition Classes

Dietitians offer nutrition classes and individual counseling. Ask your primary care provider or health care team to connect you to a dietitian.

[www.nutrition.va.gov](http://www.nutrition.va.gov)



### Whole Health

Whole Health is VA's approach to care that supports your health and well-being. Whole Health focuses on what matters to you and not what's the matter with you.

There are many resources available including educational handouts and Apps. Many VA facilities offer Whole Health classes.

[www.nutrition.va.gov](http://www.nutrition.va.gov)



### MOVE! Program

MOVE!® is a health promotion program designed to improve the lives of Veterans.

MOVE!®'score ideas—encouraging healthy eating behavior, increasing physical activity, and promoting even small weight losses—are easy to follow and based on the latest in nutrition science. With the help of your MOVE! care team, you can reduce health risks, prevent or reverse certain diseases, improve your quality of life, and even live longer!

Ask your healthcare team for a referral.

[www.move.va.gov](http://www.move.va.gov)





## Medical Alert Bracelets and Necklaces



It is best to be prepared for an emergency.

Wearing a necklace or bracelet is an important way to stay safe. In the event of a medical emergency you may be unconscious and unable to speak. The medical alert necklace or bracelet will provide emergency workers with information about your medical history.

Wearing a medical necklace or bracelet and carrying a fast-acting carbohydrate source with you in case you have a low blood glucose or hypoglycemia are important safety practices.

**VA:** Medical alert necklaces or bracelets may be ordered through Prosthetics.

**DOD:** Not yet available.

**It is important to wear medical alert jewelry if exercising, traveling, or driving.**

**Download a Wallet Card**



Medication	Dosage	Time


**Allergies:**

**I HAVE DIABETES.** If I am acting strangely or cannot be awakened, my blood sugar may be low.

- If I cannot be awakened or cannot swallow, do not try to give me anything by mouth. Please contact Emergency Medical Services (911) immediately.
- If I can swallow, give me 4 to 6 ounces of fruit juice, sweetened soft drink, or other sugar source. If I am not better within 10-15 minutes, contact Emergency Medical Services (911) immediately.

**Emergency Contact:**  
 Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Diabetes Care Card**  
 My Name: \_\_\_\_\_



VA/DoD Diabetes Clinical Practice Guideline Toolkit

Bring this card to each visit with you educator. Discuss these issues during to record your results so that you can t

Test/Service	Target My Goal
A1C (Every 3-6 months)	
Blood Pressure (Every visit)	
Weight (Every visit)	
Foot Exam (Every visit)	
Lipid Profile (Annually)	
LDL	
HDL	
Triglycerides	
Total Cholesterol	

Microalbuminuria (Annually)	
Dilated Eye Exam (Annually) *	
Dental Exam (Every 6 months)	
Foot Risk Exam	
Flu Vaccine (In Season)	
Pneumonia Vaccine	
Self-Management Education	

\* Every 2 years if normal



VA/DoD Diabetes Clinical Practice Guideline Toolkit  
<http://www.dmo.army.mil> | <http://www.resa/qaem/va.gov>

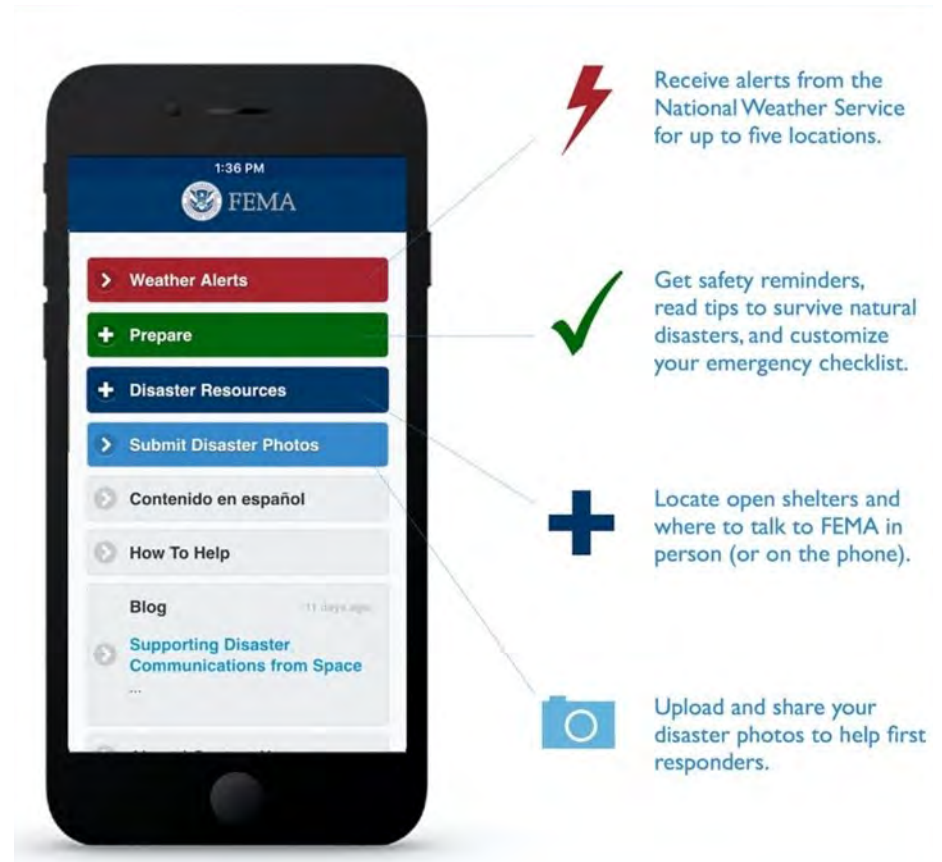
## Disaster Planning

- Make an emergency plan and kit.
- Store 3 days\* of diabetes supplies and consider having an extra glucagon emergency kit.
- Store 3 days\* of non-perishable food.
- Keep insulin, supplies, and equipment in a safe location.
- Find a Diabetes Disaster Team if you need help.
- Download the FEMA App:  
[www.FEMA.gov](http://www.FEMA.gov)



### Disaster Considerations:

- What type of disasters do you have in your area?
- How will that disaster impact your diabetes care?
- Do you have a plan to take care of your diabetes in the event of a disaster?
- Do you have a diabetes disaster kit?
- What is in your disaster kit or what do you plan to put in it?



**Insulin remains usable for 28 days at room temperature and up to 86 degrees Fahrenheit**

## Community Resources

There are a host of community resources available to you. Contact local churches, health departments, or community centers to see what is available. Also, there are several national resources.



### National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse

<https://niddk.nih.gov/health-information/community-health-outreach/information-clearinghouses?dkrd=hispt1175>

1-800-860-8747



### National Institutes of Health

<https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2020/08/finding-reliable-health-information-online>



### National Diabetes Education Program

<https://www.niddki.nih.gov/health-information/community-health-outreach/information-clearinghouses/nkdep>



### Defense Commissary Agency

<https://commissaries.com/recipes/all-recipes>



### Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<https://www.cdc.gov>

1-800-232-4636



## Living Well

Living well with diabetes requires making changes in the way you live. Whether you're becoming more active, making better food choices, or remembering to take your medications; changing a behavior is a process.

When you practice diabetes self-care behaviors like monitoring, taking medications, healthy eating, being active, healthy coping and reducing risks, you are taking the best course of action to living well with diabetes.

### Notes:

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### Monitoring



Monitoring glucose gives you information about your diabetes management.

### Be Active



Be active. There are many health benefits.

### Taking Medication



Discuss medication options with your provider.

### Healthy Coping



Stay positive!  
Your feelings can affect your health.

### Healthy Eating



Eat healthy. Be mindful of food choices which can affect your health.

### Reducing Risks



The goal for management is reducing complication risk.



## Develop a Personal Health Plan

Your healthcare team may be experts in diabetes and can help you set targets to stay healthy but you are the expert on YOU. Others can only help you manage your diabetes.

Designing a plan and managing your diabetes is what this program is all about. In these modules, you have been presented with ways to help self-manage your diabetes and live a happy, healthy, and balanced life. Ongoing education and support is available.

Thank you for letting us be part of your journey with diabetes.



Download and complete “My Health Choices” to help set goals and develop a plan for managing your diabetes.

## Remember

- Make SMART goals that encourage behavior change.
- As your life changes, your plan may need to change, too. In fact, anytime your plan isn’t working as intended, it may be time to change the plan. This can help to protect your health, now and in the future.



## Summary

This session discussed barriers that interfere with diabetes self-management behaviors and introduced an effective approach to solving diabetes problems. Several community and national resources were provided to help support your journey with diabetes. Finally, to help manage your diabetes in the future, we reviewed how to create a personal plan.

## Key Points

- Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support is an on-going process.
- Be prepared for the unexpected. Have an emergency plan and kit.
- For your safety, wear medical alert jewelry, and carry fast carbs.
- Take advantage of VA, DOD, community and national resources, and Apps.
- Think about your next goals for maintaining good health.
- Talk to your provider or healthcare team to identify resources and support to help manage your diabetes.

## Before Next Class

- Review appropriate patient handbook module(s)
- Write down your questions
- Work on your health care goal or changing a habit/behavior







**American Diabetes Association®**  
**Education Recognition Program**

The American Diabetes Association Recognizes this education service as meeting the National Standards for Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support

If you have any concerns about the diabetes education you receive

Please call  
**1-888-232-0822**

or

write  
**American Diabetes Association**  
**Director, Education Recognition Program**  
**2451 Crystal Drive, Suite 900**  
**Arlington, VA 22202**

Refer to 006585