

## Introduction to the Better Me! Small Group Class

This class has been designed for approximately 10 students who have a BMI of 85% or greater.

We will meet after school one afternoon a week for 1 hour and 45 minutes. This program is an 8-week series. Our goal is to help students start thinking about making healthy lifestyle choices.

Each meeting consists of four components:

- 1) Goal Setting/Behavior Change
- 2) Healthy Snacks
- 3) Nutrition education/activity
- 4) Physical activity/exercise

### Family Involvement

Prior to the program beginning, an informational "Better Me! Family Night" should be held. This will inform the parents and students about the program, and help them decide if they want to participate.

Parents will be encouraged to attend the *wrap-ups* at the end of each meeting, read their weekly *family handout*, and also participate in *weekly family updates*.

Parent/family updates consist of the health educator contacting the parent by phone or email to give feedback on their child's progress in the program. Feedback can be given on participation level, the Better Me! log, general comments, or any questions that the parent may have. This is also a time for the parent and health educator to build a relationship that may help facilitate behavior changes in the child and in the family.

### Class organization

*10 minutes* of sign in, weigh in

*10 minutes* discuss Better Me! logs

*20 minutes* for healthy snack

*20 minutes* for nutrition education/activity

*30 minutes* of physical activity

*15 minutes* of wrap-up

### Evaluation

- 1) Evaluating pre and post BMI%
- 2) Scoring on a self-esteem scale administered at the beginning and end of the eight weeks.

### BMI%

Make sure the students' BMI% is obtained before the class starts, and measure their height and weight to obtain BMI% again during the last meeting, or near the end of the 8 weeks.

### Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

The scale is a ten-item Likert scale with items answered on a four-point scale - from strongly agree to strongly disagree. See attachment to learn more about the scale, and how to score it.

The first scale (pre test) is administered during the first meeting, and the posttest is administered near the end of the 8 weeks.

It is important that the students know that there are no right or wrong answers. Also tell them that their answers are private and will not be shared with the class. It's important that they answer each question- ask them raise their hands if they have a question.

## THE BREAK DOWN:

### 10 minutes of sign in, weigh in

- 1) Have students sign attendance sheet
- 2) Have bottled water available
- 3) Voluntary weigh in. Make sure privacy is maintained and weights kept organized in a binder to monitor progress.

### 10 minutes discuss Better Me! logs,

Have each student share a choice they are proud of from last week. Encourage them to also share any barriers faced and then problem solve as a group.

Appropriate incentives should be offered when a log is turned in.

### 20 minutes for healthy snack

Try to set up for the snack before the students arrive. Wear protective gloves when handling food. Make this a fun time and encourage students to try new things. Discuss the healthy snack and do any clean up while the students eat, to transition into the next activity.

### 20 minutes for nutrition education

Lessons vary each week

### 30 minutes of physical activity

The Cool Springs YMCA in Franklin, TN created lesson plans for our physical activity games each week. The Health Educator will lead the 30-minute activity.

If going outside isn't an option, walk briskly in the halls, or lead your games inside as best as you can. Some students will need much encouragement to participate. Try to provide these students some one-on-one, while also keeping the group on task.

\*\*\*Parent/guardian permission is required for each child attending the program. Parents have been advised to contact their child's Pediatrician for clearance to participate in the physical activity portion of the class.

15 minutes of wrap-up

Make it clear during "Family Night" that family members are encouraged to participate in the wrap-up (rather than waiting in the car). Have the group stand in a circle, students standing with their family member. As time allows, have students share what they learned today.

Suggestion: Have the group stand in a close circle, hands in the center and on the count of three, yell, "Better Me!".

**\*MAKE SURE STUDENTS HAVE THEIR NEW LOG, HANDOUTS AND THE FAMILY UPDATE.**

Family handouts are given to inform family members what we did in class that day. Family members are encouraged to contact the Health Educator if they have any questions related to the class.

DISCUSSION

Suggestions for group discussions are included and are to be used as time allows.

## Session # One

It's Up To You! It's Your Choice!

### Introduction

The health educator introduces himself or herself, and explains how the class will work each week. Explain that it is expected that everyone treat each other with respect. It is also expected that each student is motivated to make changes, and has signed up for the class so they can learn the necessary steps to living a healthy lifestyle. Explain that if you do not want to learn how to make healthy changes, then this probably isn't the class for you. A quick icebreaker would be useful at this time. Perhaps stating your name and something that you are good at, or why you want to be in Better Me!.

Hand out the Respect Your Health wristbands to each student to wear daily as a reminder that we need to always be thinking about eating better and moving more! We also discuss that green is the symbol for health and vitality.

### GOAL SETTING

Pass out the Better Me! logs and explain how to use them.

Explain that if they earn \_\_\_\_\_ points, they will earn \_\_\_\_\_ at the end of the 8 weeks.

Also let them know that incentives will be given each week for logs that are completed and turned in.

### HEALTHY SNACK

Trail mix

If time allows then they can help to mix it all together.

The Health Educator can discuss how each ingredient is healthy.

Napkins and/or a small cup/baggies will be needed for this week.

## NUTRITION

We have so many choices to make each and every day - what to eat for breakfast, whether to eat or not, what to wear, what time to get up so that we can get to school on time. Guess what? You had to make the decision to come to this class!!! You could have stayed home and watched TV but you didn't. Good for you!!!

Part of what we want to focus on during our time together is helping you learn to make good choices for your health! Over the next few weeks we will spend time together helping you plan some goals for yourself! We will not focus on you losing weight BUT if you do - that is great!!! We will have scales here for you to weigh and we don't want you to discuss your weight with someone else because it is a personal thing. Our goal is for you to feel better about yourself so that you can be your best!

We also want to help you develop life skills that will help you make good choices about many things in your life. We will share some of our struggles and success stories with you and hopefully you can learn from what we have gone through and we want to learn from you too!

Activity - this relates to making choices! John is a middle school student who has many choices to make each day! Please help identify all the choices that he has to make during a typical day! Handout JOHN'S CHOICES ACTIVITY and have the students underline each choice that John makes.

*John wakes up to the sound of the alarm clock and hesitates as to whether he will get up or push snooze for ten more minutes of sleep! Once up and after he makes his morning trip to the*

*bathroom he must decide what to wear! Even for guys this can sometimes be a difficult decision! Then he comes into the kitchen and has to decide what to eat for breakfast or is he going to skip breakfast? Once at school, he must decide whether to think during class or take a nap since the teacher won't see him because he sits in the back of the classroom. When it is lunchtime and he knows he needs to eat but he hates the food in the school cafeteria - what does he do? Does he hit the vending machines? Did he even think about taking his lunch to school? John has some friends that asked him to go shoot basketball after school but he knows he is not any good - does he go? And then he is hungry for an afternoon snack - what does he do? Well, he makes it through the afternoon and returns home for dinner...what are they having? Will he eat it or fix himself a sandwich? Does he have a snack later that night? Does he spend a couple of hours at the computer for the evening or does he do his homework?*

*THERE ARE LOTS OF DECISIONS TO BE MADE EVERY SINGLE DAY OF OUR LIVES!!!*

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: see your YMCA physical activity guide.

### WRAP-UP

Praise the group for participating in the program and remind parents that they will be contacted that week for their parent update. The first week there will not be logs to be discussed, but the habit of the weekly contact can begin with friendly conversation, and any feedback provided and questions answered.

DISCUSSION (to be used when time allows)

Ask the students if they have seen The Biggest Loser TV show? These people are trying hard to make some changes in their health. The neat thing about them is they don't look like everyone else on TV. Ask them how most everyone looks on TV? Gets some discussion going. What does being healthy mean? The healthier you are the less likely you will get SICK! So being healthy means what? Eating more of the good foods and less of the wrong foods! Moving More! Talking about the things that bother you! All these things help to make us healthy!!! Wind up the first class with questions and come back for the second class next week!!!

## Session # Two

Move It to Lose It!

### SIGN IN, WEIGH IN

### GOAL SETTING

#### HEALTHY SNACK: Fresh fruit mix

Serve a fresh fruit salad and discuss the importance of lots of variety in our diet. Talk about the colors of the fruit and how each color gives a different nutrient that our bodies need. Show a poster with different fruits and vegetables. Encourage the students to sample fruits that they have not tasted before. Mention the 5 A DAY plan for eating more fruits and vegetables.

### LESSON

What do you think the theme is when you hear the title of today's class? You're Right! PHYSICAL ACTIVITY! It is so important for us to move around and stretch our bodies because if we don't - what happens? We begin to shrink, ache, and hurt until eventually we can't move! Of course this takes a long time to happen but little by little we get to where we can't move. Also moving around helps us to burn up calories that we don't need! So if you overeat at a meal, then by getting some physical activity you will feel better and burn some of those calories off. The goal is for us to all get some form of physical exercise every day! Yes, every day! I want to encourage you to get 30 minutes of physical exercise every day! On the food and exercise logs - it says that you can count up to 60 minutes of exercise a day! We want to start with a goal of thirty minutes every day! What are some kinds of exercise that will count? Walking, riding a bike, playing basketball, throwing

Frisbee, dancing at home to music, taking the stairs, mowing the grass, jumping rope, taking a karate class, .....and when we do these things, we feel better!! We sleep better and we deal with our problems better. We start to like moving around instead of sitting all the time! Ways that we don't move are what?.....watching T.V., playing video games, going to the movies, and sitting at the computer. We don't burn any calories when we just sit....we have to move!

Exercise helps us stay motivated to take care of our health.

Exercise can help lower our blood pressure, prevent diabetes, and strengthen your muscles and bones to help keep your body flexible. These diseases are starting to affect people at an early age - your age! AEROBIC exercise helps strengthen your heart.

STRENGTH-TRAINING exercise helps you build stronger muscles and bones. STRETCHES help your body stay flexible. You may want to decide when you're going to exercise...some people will get up early in the morning to exercise - forfeit their sleep so that they can get the exercise over with....others have to wait until after school or work to exercise. Find out what works for you!!!

### ACTIVITY

Have the students make two teams. Each team member will go to the board, one at a time, and write reasons to get physical activity or exercise. Have fun with it and see which team can write the most in 5 minutes. Discuss their answers and mention any that they didn't include, such as 1) helps to build strong muscles and bones 2) look better 3) get over the "blues" or feeling depressed 4) have more energy 5) get along better with your family 6) have fun with friends 7) relieve boredom 8) makes us hungry! 9) escape an alien attack!

### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Remember 30 minutes is our goal and everyone needs to participate.

## WRAP UP

### GROUP DISCUSSION

If time allows - discuss team sports and how tough it is to make the teams these days! - You don't have to play on a sports team to be in good physical health. Sometimes it is hard to make the team or the cheerleading squad. How do you feel about the organized sports teams? Any thoughts?

## Lesson # Three

What's a Serving verses a Helping?

### SIGN IN, WEIGH IN

### GOAL SETTING

HEALTHY SNACK: Veggies and dip

Have a tray of fresh vegetables cut up and various kinds of healthy dressings to dip the veggies in ... let's pick our favorite dressing and discuss vegetables at this time!

Today's class is all about what we eat and how much we eat! You can already identify many of the healthy foods that we should eat that are good for you. Let's review and list a few of them. Let the students name some good, healthy foods ..... Now, we want to make sure that we are eating the right amount of these foods - we want to eat a serving instead of a helping! (Bring out the visuals such as a deck of cards, tennis ball, baseball, piece of fruit, any food models that we can show, etc.)

### NUTRITION

There is a Power Point called *Portion Distortion* that the Health Educator can show at this to emphasize portion sizes now verses portion sizes ten years ago.

*Or use the following lesson*

What is a helping? Ask the children to help describe a helping and then tell how it is different from a serving. Conclude with the statement, "no food is off limits to us - we just need to eat a serving and not a helping or two or three!!!".

Use a clear gallon bag and ask the students to pretend that the bag was their stomach and we had to fill it up so that they wouldn't be hungry! Demonstrate putting good foods into the bag which represented our stomach and then we emptied the bag and put unhealthy foods into it! We want the students to know that it is important to feel full after eating...so being careful what we select to eat is important.

### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

### WRAP UP

### DISCUSSION

If time allows, look at a magazine! By just flipping through it - what do you notice? Clothes, cars, pretty people, nice houses, pretty hair...get the group talking!! Discuss how most of us will never look like that and it is o.k. Our goal needs to be the best we can be!!!

## Session # Four

### Labels - Who Needs Them?

#### SIGN IN, WEIGH IN

#### GOAL SETTING

HEALTHY SNACK: Chips and salsa, or wheat crackers and string cheese.

#### NUTRITION

Post a food label poster, such as the Power of Choice "Read it before you eat it" poster. Or distribute a copy of a food label to everyone.

Discuss carbohydrates (CHOs), fats, proteins and total calories. All food is made up of CHOs, FAT, and PROTEIN. CHOs make up the biggest part of what we eat.

CHO - carbohydrates are starches; there are two types - simple and complex. The complex ones are wheat bread, oats, all fruit, some veggies such as potatoes and green peas, whole grain cereals. The simple CHOs are the cakes, pies, cookies, juice, some cereals.

FAT - Middle school age students need approximately 45 grams of fat per day total. Talk about fat....name some foods with lots of fat in them...ice cream, peanut butter, cookies, whole milk, french fries, some crackers, etc.

PROTEIN - we think about meat when we think of protein...chicken, fish, hamburgers, steak, pork chops, eggs, cheese, cottage cheese, peanut butter, etc. Protein tends to be one of those foods that we overeat. Show food models of the correct amount of meat that they should have.

### ACTIVITY OPTION # 1

Distribute actual food containers/packages to each student and let's look at the food labels of each food that they have. They will need to tell the class whether this is a good, healthy food to eat or not.

### ACTIVITY OPTION # 2

Have the students get in small groups. Have them plan a meal for breakfast, lunch and supper using the nutrition cards on the table. Give each person a placemat and some of those nutrition cards to make a meal from. Then discuss.

### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

### WRAP UP

## Session # Five

Fast Food for You!!!

### SIGN IN, WEIGH IN

### GOAL SETTING

HEALTHY SNACK: Various flavors of yogurt. Mixing some raisins, granola or nuts in might be good to do also. We will need cups, spoons and napkins for sure!

### NUTRITION

Fast food is not going away! It is here to stay BUT we can learn how to eat healthier when we go to these places. For example, a big fast food place that people like to go to is SubWay and you can eat healthy there. Today we have many options that did not exist years ago! Today, there is every kind of food to "grab and go" that we can dream of!!! Can you eat fast food and not gain weight? Sure you can! You have to know how to select the right foods for yourself ....I never get cheese on my Sonic burger...it saves me 130 calories....I usually only get fries if I am splitting them with someone....therefore I only get half the calories...if I know that I am going to a birthday party that day, then I don't eat junk food all day - I will try to eat more wisely because I know that I will eat some foods that have lots of calories!!

### ACTIVITY #1

Let's look at a few fast food labels. We will compare McDonald's, Sonic, SubWay, etc.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

WRAP UP

## Session # Six

Urge to Splurge!

### SIGN IN, WEIGH IN

### GOAL SETTING

HEALTHY SNACK: Mini bagels and spread.

Have 2 different healthy spreads to use. Discuss the fat in donuts vs. bagels. Discuss the benefits of eating mini bagels over regular bagels.

### NUTRITION

What do you think our topic is today with a title like this?...**OVEREATING!!!** We have all done it! Today we want to look at what triggers us to overeat. We all have days where we just don't eat right! Being aware of this is a big step! We must pick ourselves up and start over again. When we eat too much, we can get depressed or feel very sorry for ourselves **BUT** what we need to do is start over/try again when you mess up! This is how we become successful with being our best. We want to learn how to do this during this session. Being our healthiest is a process and if you guys start now - then you can learn this lesson that will help you all your life!!!

When do we need to eat? We need to eat when we are hungry...not when we are sad or mad. It is important to eat something at breakfast, lunch and supper. If we skip a meal we tend to be so hungry by time the next meal comes around that we overeat. We want you to get to the place where you can tell if you are hungry **OR** if you just want to eat!!!!!! A good rule of thumb is to eat less of the **CHOs** and more of the free stuff....what is the free stuff? It

is salad, raw veggies, water, unsweet beverages - these don't have many calories whereas the CHOs do!

### ACTIVITY: YOUR 911 PLAN

Have the students make a list on the board. On one side, list a reason why we might over eat. On the other side, make a list of ways to handle this "emergency". Encourage each student to contribute an answer.

### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

### WRAP UP

### DISCUSSION

If time allows - discuss how difficult it is to buy clothes for yourself. Do you feel that you can't wear anything stylish because of your size?

## Session # Seven

Make Drinks Count!

### SIGN IN, WEIGH IN

Make sure you have all students' height and weight

### GOAL SETTING

SELF ESTEEM SCALE: It might be wise to administer the questionnaire during session #7, in case some students are absent during the next week.

Administer the self-esteem post questionnaire. It is important that the student know that there are no right or wrong answers, it's just asking them how they feel. Also tell them that their answers are private and will not be shared with the class. It's important that they answer each question- have them raise their hands if they have a question.

### HEALTHY SNACK: Drinks

Try some good drink options...low fat chocolate milk, V-8 juice, Crystal Light lemonade, 100% juice (make a point about these types of drinks still having lots of sugar in them) and also serve some low fat crackers leftover from last week.

### NUTRITION

Have a regular soda can and a diet soda can side by side. Use the UT Extension poster. Ask the students how many teaspoons of sugar are in the regular soda and how much is in the diet soda? Then show them the amount of sugar for them to see with their own eyes. Then show them a bottle of juice that you could get at the convenience store....and ask the students how much sugar is in that bottle. Then show them a bottled water! Look at a milk jug

and discuss the various calories in milk depending on what they drink! Have each student look closely at the nutrition information on each drink. Look at the total calories section and then look at the carbohydrate information.

Why are beverages important? They are mostly water, which is a nutrient that is vital to your life. Do you know what the % of your total body weight is water? (About 75 -80%) You can only live a short time without water!

What is a smart beverage choice? Pick more drinks that have lots of calcium and vitamin C and fewer drinks that just give you calories. Ideally, we need about 8 cups/glasses of water a day. Water will quench your thirst quicker than any other drink. Choose flavored lowfat milk; drink smoothies made with lowfat milk and yogurt, and limit juice. Try to only drink one soda a day! This may be one of those goals that you set for yourself.

### ACTIVITY # 1

Present three different sizes of cups to the class. Discuss what beverage should go in each cup. Have the students rank beverages based on these questions. 1) You're thirsty after playing soccer - what should you drink? 2) It is breakfast - can you have milk and juice? 3) You're ordering fast food and need a drink - what should you order?

So what happens if we drink sodas a bunch each day? We crowd out the good stuff like vitamin C and bone-building calcium. Some people get high blood pressure from drinking lots of sodas each day. What is a bunch?

### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

## WRAP UP

## Session # Eight

Snacks: Chews for Health

### SIGN IN, WEIGH IN

Make sure you have all students' height and weight

SELF ESTEEM SCALE: Give to students that have not taken the posttest yet.

Administer the self-esteem scale and collect. Remind the student that there are no right or wrong answers, they are just questions about how they feel.

HEALTHY SNACK: Low fat popcorn and diet soda

Let the students try some different sodas to see if they find one that they like! Diet Dr. Pepper is one that many people can drink when adjusting to the taste of the sugar free soda.

### NUTRITION

Is snacking o.k? Of course it is! Teenagers need more food and nutrients because they are growing. Snacking can be a good thing! Anyone can snack if they are wise about what they select! Make your snacks count! Having a snack can pep you up and get you through the day! An afternoon snack is a great idea..just pick a healthy snack.

### ACTIVITY

Put several options for snacks on the table and let the students get into small groups of 3-4 and arrange the snacks from the healthiest snack to the least healthy snack. We will have an assortment of snacks...anything from a Little Debbie snack cake to an oatmeal cookie or even some vanilla wafers for the children to

make decisions about. Then let each group talk about how they came to their conclusion.

### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

### WRAP UP/CELEBRATION

Hand out individual certificates to students/families for completing the class. Award the students that reached their points required for the "big" reward incentive for reaching \_\_\_\_\_ points with their Better Me! logs.