

Behavioral Therapy

Behavioral therapy helps patients modify lifestyle habits related to healthy eating and physical activity. Behavioral therapy techniques aim to change not only short-term but long-term behavior, so that patients maintain healthy lifestyle choices throughout their lives by maximizing their ability to make changes and engage in self-care.¹⁻³

Techniques	Definition	Examples
Self-monitoring	Recording one's food intake and activity level	Food diary, activity log,
Stimulus control	Becoming aware of stimuli associated with overeating and avoiding them	Avoid eating while watching TV
Behavioral substitution	Substitute a behavior associated with overeating with a health-promoting behavior	Take a walk instead of eat in response to stress
Problem solving	Identify problematic behaviors, list potential solutions, and select most likely solution by evaluating costs and benefits	If excessive fat and sugar intake is a problem, assess whether tactics such as portion control or food substitution would work better for the individual patient
Cognitive restructuring	Identify and replace distorted thoughts, such as all-or-nothing thinking or overgeneralization, with more realistic and/or rational ideas	Encourage patients to accept incremental goals rather than weight normalization as a sign of success
Goal setting	Set realistic goals rather than unattainable ones, such as normalization of BMI	Encourage realistic weight loss goals, such as a 7% weight loss

References

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2. Fabricatore AN. Behavior therapy and cognitive-behavioral therapy of obesity: is there a difference? *J Am Diet Assoc.* 2007;107:92-99.
3. Keller K. *Encyclopedia of Obesity*, Vol 1. Los Angeles: Sage Publications, Inc.; 2008.

