



# Healthy Behavior Support Service (HBSS): Weight Watchers Freestyle® Protocol

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## 1. Describe participant flow through HBSS (referral, participation, follow-up and program time frame).

Weight Watchers Freestyle® is based on the latest research and behavioral interventions to help participants to lose or maintain a healthy weight, as well as to build healthy habits. The program is modeled on group-based social support with weekly one hour meetings that take place at various community venues and various times, to provide flexibility for participants. Core program content is delivered face to face over initial weeks and includes goal setting, a food points system, being more physically active, eating out, and maintaining motivation. A weigh-in occurs at each weekly session, as well as individual counseling.

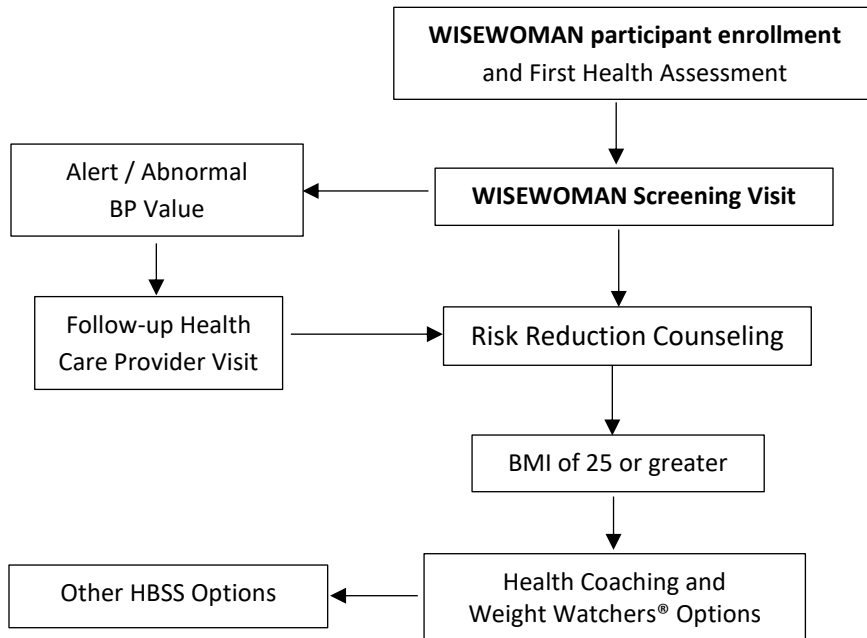
Iowa WISEWOMAN (WW) program participants who have a BMI of 25 or greater will be offered the opportunity to participate in the Weight Watchers Freestyle® program. WW participants referred to Weight Watchers Freestyle® will be provided with a 13-week, \$156 membership vouchers, that include workshop vouchers and vouchers to access the Weight Watchers Freestyle® application and its tools. A participant is considered to have completed the Weight Watchers intervention, when they attend 12 of the 13 sessions. The Iowa WW local coordinators (LCs), who are also trained and certified health coaches, will provide guidance on the use of these vouchers, and will gain agreement with the participant on participation and weight loss reporting. The participant must agree to follow program protocols as indicated. Health coaching will be provided by the LCs (Health Coaches).

Participants may also participate in other WW healthy behavior support services and/or community-based programs.

The three WW health coach-led health coaching sessions will occur over a three-month timeframe, with each session approximately one month apart. **Attendance of the Weight Watchers sessions will take place within the same time frame as the health coaching sessions.**

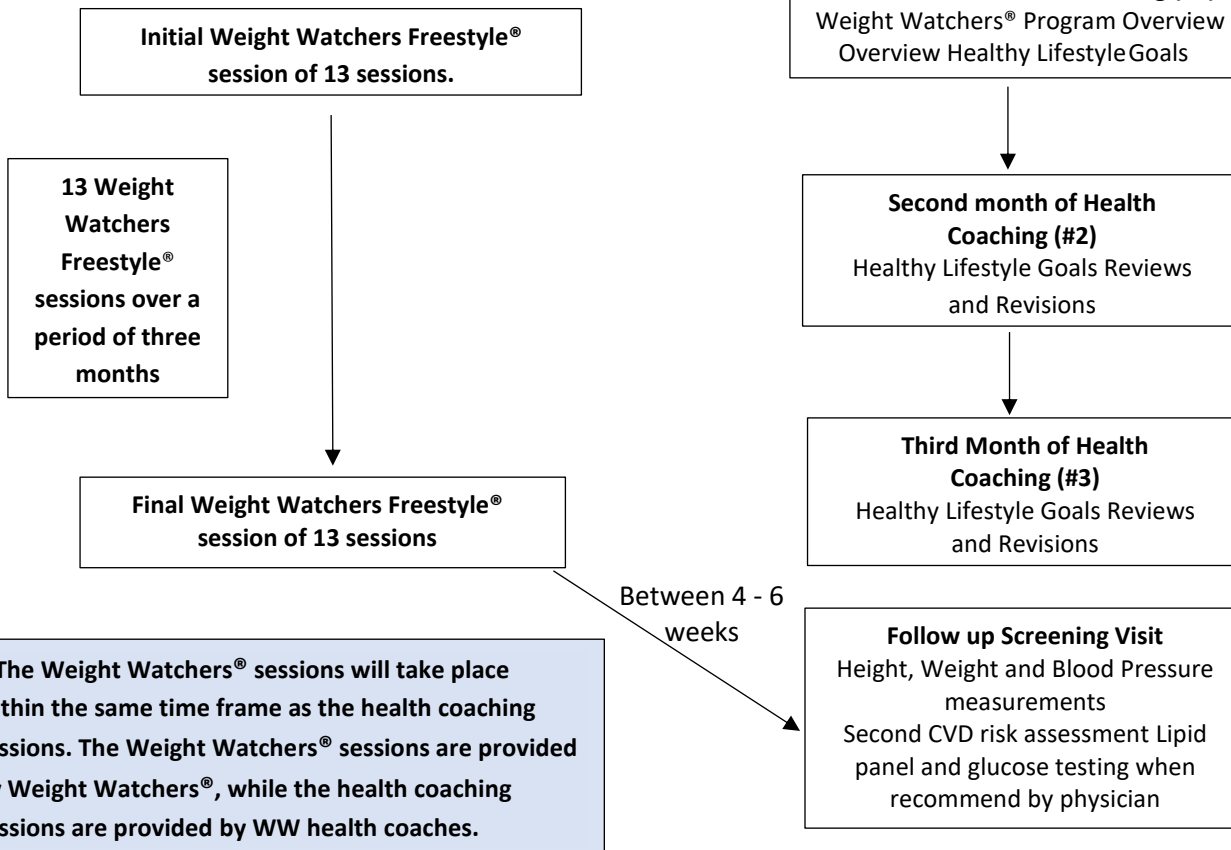
**The participant will undertake a follow-up screening not less than four weeks but not more than six weeks, following completion of health coaching and the Weight Watchers sessions.** The overall timeframe from a participant's **initial screening** to **follow-up screening** cannot be less than three months. The **follow-up screening** will include measurements of the participant's height, weight and blood pressure, as well as a second CVD health risk assessment. A lipid panel and/or glucose testing may also be carried out if medically indicated by the physician, for participants that exhibited a high cholesterol level and/or diabetes at the initial screening visit.

The flow diagram below shows how WW participants will be referred to the Weight Watchers Freestyle® intervention.



**\*Weight Watchers Freestyle® Program**

**\*Local Coordinator/Health Coach**



**\* The Weight Watchers® sessions will take place within the same time frame as the health coaching sessions. The Weight Watchers® sessions are provided by Weight Watchers®, while the health coaching sessions are provided by WW health coaches.**



**2. Describe strategies incorporated in the HBSS, client engagement in the HBSS and number of sessions to completion**

**1. Health Coaching sessions with certified health coaches (local coordinators (LCs)) (up to 60 minutes)**

- The Health Coaching program is an individualized program adaptable to the needs and readiness level of each participant. Coaching takes into consideration the participant's health priorities and willingness/ability to make a change. The health coach will utilize motivational interviewing techniques to assist the participant in setting SMART goals. The health coach will help the participant overcome barriers and will serve as a source of support and encouragement to the participant when working to reach goals.
- Participants will be scheduled for their initial Health Coaching session with their Local Program Coordinator/Health Coach. The health coach will use motivational interviewing techniques to identify healthy lifestyles areas (i.e. exercise, nutrition or smoking cessation) which the participant would like to improve. The health coach will conduct a minimum of three health coaching sessions with each participant. At each health coaching session, the health coach will review goals set with the program participant.
- Data on referral to, participation in, and completion of the National DPP Lifestyle Change Program intervention will be recorded by the health coach in the WISEWOMAN database system for submission with the Minimum Data Elements (MDEs).

**2. The Weight Watchers Freestyle® program**

The Weight Watchers Freestyle® program works towards two main goals. These are 1. Weight loss, and 2. Beyond the Scale goals. All materials are available in both English and Spanish. Audio-versions are also available in English.

The Local Workshop vouchers cover the following Weight Watchers Freestyle® program activities:

- Personalized food fitness and mindset goals.
- Food and Activity tracking
- Access to digital tools to make tracking of food, activity and weight easier. Paper based versions are also available for a number of these tools.
- Access to shared learning strategies from participating peers through group work and access to participant-only social media forums.
- 24/7 online chat support
- Syncing with fitness trackers
- Weekly group workshops
- Guidance from Wellness Coaches
- Weekly private Wellness Check-ins
- Guidebooks and printed materials



### 3. *Bi-directional referral plan, tracking and feedback*

- The total number and length of each health coaching session will be tracked by the health coach. The data will be incorporated in the WISEWOMAN (WW) participant record at the health coach's office and in the WW database system for submission with the MDEs.
- The participant will be directed to report on her participation in the Weight Watchers Freestyle® intervention at the health coaching sessions or at one-month intervals, via phone or mail.
- Data on referral to, participation in, and completion of Weight Watchers Freestyle® intervention will be recorded by the health coach in the WISEWOMAN database system for submission with the MDEs.

### 4. *Resources required (both human and financial).*

- Health coaching is a required part of the local program contract. It is not fee-for-service based; therefore, there are no specific CPT codes or reimbursement plans for the activities. The local program via contract will be reimbursed at \$325 per participant for providing WISEWOMAN services including data collection and health coaching.
- Weight Watchers Freestyle® - The 13 week Weight Watchers Freestyle® Local workshop vouchers cost \$156.00. In addition to the 13-week local workshop vouchers, this price includes:
  - One 14 week digital access voucher
  - A free kick start kit of Weight Watchers products worth \$50.00
  - Local Workshop registration fee is waived.

### 5. *Is the HBSS offered by a clinical care team? Yes/No. If Yes, describe how staff, who are implementing HBSS, is integrated into team. If No, describe who is delivering the HBSS and their qualifications/trainings*

- For information pertaining to the health coaching implementation, please refer to the Health Coaching Protocol.
- Weight Watchers® is the most studied commercial weight management program, and results show that it reliably produces weight losses of 5% or more of body weight, which has repeatedly shown to reduce CVD risk factors such as cholesterol, diabetes, high blood pressure, and improves quality of life. Additionally, Weight Watchers® is one of the few commercially available weight management programs that fulfills the United States Preventative Task Force criteria for behavioral lifestyle interventions for weight loss. Evaluated in numerous randomized controlled trials, Weight Watchers® has been shown to be eight times more effective than do-it-yourself weight loss programs<sup>1</sup>, and three times more effective than professionally delivered programs in producing 10% weight loss physician counseling<sup>2</sup>. Furthermore, Weight Watchers® has been found effective for those with prediabetes and type 2 diabetes, leading to improvements in weight and glucose control<sup>3</sup>. Lastly, Weight Watchers® has been shown to be one of the most cost-effective<sup>4</sup>, clinically-proven, non-surgical weight loss treatment, including medications.
- Weight Watchers Freestyle® sessions are provided by trained Weight Watchers® coaches.
- The Weight Watchers® coaches serve as anchors and facilitators in the community-based Wellness



Workshops. Their duties include:

- Facilitates the Wellness Workshop discussion, ensuring all members of the Weight Watchers® community feel included, involved and invited to participate.
  - Demonstrates active listening.
  - Inspires members to make positive changes and celebrates progress towards goals.
  - Serves as Weight Watchers® Program Expert for members.
  - Establishes rapport with members through one-on-one interaction, workshop facilitation and consistent leadership
  - Has knowledge and understanding of Weight Watchers® tools and digital tools, including Program materials, Apps and technical tools, and can help educate members
  - Prepares for Wellness Workshop Facilitation by understanding weekly topic and relevance to member success
  - Champions the Weight Watchers® Program
  - Has responsibility for Wellness Workshop attendance growth
  - Identifies member needs and recommends Weight Watchers® products and tools.
- Weight Watchers® coaches undergo trainings provided by Weight Watchers®. The coaches are provided trainings in the following areas:
    - The Weight Watchers® FreeStyle Program
    - Behavioral Science
    - Nutrition Science
    - Facilitation Skills
  - In addition Weight Watchers® coaches are required to have/be:
    - Weight Watchers® members in the past and undergone the Weight Watchers® program.
    - Achieved and maintained (or continued loss) for a minimum of 12 consecutive weeks either a 10% weight loss or healthy BMI weight with minimum five pound loss (if joined outside the healthy BMI range); or five pound loss (if joined within healthy BMI range) on the Weight Watchers® program.
    - Proficient in Microsoft Office suite and web-based applications.
    - Ownership and active use of smartphone and regular access to Internet-enabled computer or tablet.
    - Superior organizational, communication, customer service, and time management skills.
    - Excellent interpersonal skills.
    - Facilitation skills, team leadership, and ability to build community.

### References

<sup>1</sup> Johnston CA, et al. A randomized controlled trial of a community-based behavioral counseling program. Am J Med 2013;126:1143.e19-24. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.amjmed.2013.04.025>. This trial was funded by Weight Watchers International, Inc.



<sup>2</sup> Pinto AM, et al. Combining behavioral weight loss treatment and a commercial program: a randomized clinical trial. *Obesity* (Silver Spring). 2013 Apr;21(4):673-80.

<sup>3</sup> O'Neil et al. (2016). Randomized controlled trial of a nationally available weight control program tailored for adults with type 2 diabetes, *Obesity*, 24, 2269-2277

<sup>4</sup> Gudzone KA et al. Efficacy of Commercial Weight-loss programs. *Annals Intern Med*.

**6. Describe any challenges and solutions to referral and participation in HBSS.**

- Transportation vouchers will be made available for participants to reduce distance-related barriers to participating in Weight Watchers Freestyle® sessions. The WISEWOMAN IDPH staff will track the use and distribution of the vouchers.

**7. Describe how the HBSS is evaluated to determine the effectiveness of the program implementation and outcomes.**

- During Risk Reduction Counseling, which takes place after a participant is screened and has received her screening results, the participant is assessed to determine her level of readiness for change and health priorities and goals. Risk Reduction Counseling and the participant's first health risk assessment will be used to guide the health coaching process and establish a baseline for evaluating the effectiveness of health coaching.
- During the health coaching sessions, the health coach will assist the participant in setting and recording small measureable goals. Progress toward these goals will be assessed and the end results will be recorded. Improvements in MDE behavioral and health assessment measures will be captured at the follow-up screening visit through the CVD Health Risk Assessment form and the CVD Evaluation form.
- The WISEWOMAN Evaluation Plan will include the following question which addresses Health Coaching and HBSS (including Weight Watchers Freestyle®) outcomes:
  - To what extent did participation in health coaching and/ or HBSS contribute to improving participants' management of CVD risk measures (including risk for diabetes, hyperlipidemia, overweight/obesity smoking cessation)?

