

# Tips for Engaging DSMES

Get to Know Your Group



## About Our Program

We are a multi-site National Diabetes Prevention Program with sites spanning across our county. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have recently shifted our program delivery model to a distance learning approach. Our community has a significant Hispanic and older adult population, though we serve community members of various ages, races, and ethnicities.

## Remember the Details

It's important to take the time to get to know the members in your group. This will allow the coach to best serve the needs of the group and each individual. We encourage participants to open up and share about themselves— their history, culture, hobbies, family life and goals. After everyone has shared, the coach highlights similarities and unique differences amongst the group that will help to foster a supportive growth environment.

Understanding the community you serve is also vital. Our coaches are local and familiar with the geographical and cultural landscape of various communities within our county. The environment in which someone lives or spends the majority of their time is a major influence on their lifestyle behaviors. Here's a tip: If you aren't familiar with the community, take notes so you can remember specific details about your participants' environments. Our goal is for participant's to feel seen and represented in our group sessions.

During distance learning sessions it's important to spend time doing ice breakers and getting to know each other. This becomes incredibly important if you have group members who are joining by phone or without video capability in order to foster a personal and supportive group environment. Say hello to everyone who joins the class. When speaking, be specific with your requests. For example, "I want to hear from at least 3 people about something that went well for them last week." Then call on people by name to share or pass.

Make sure to say everyone's name several times during any given session so each participant feels included in the group. Ideally, we want to hear from every member in the group at least one time over the course of a session. Our coaches aim to keep their own energy level high and smile, regardless if participants can see us or not, to set a positive tone for the group session.

For additional tips, visit  
**[DiabetesEducator.org/EngagingDSMES](https://DiabetesEducator.org/EngagingDSMES)**.

