



ONLINE SUPPORT GROUPS AND WEIGHT MANAGEMENT



ONLINE SUPPORT GROUPS FOR WEIGHT MANAGEMENT



Online support groups for weight management can include private or open groups found on facebook or other online forums. These groups usually provide tips for healthy food choices and exercises. In addition, they connect participants with other individuals to help provide support, feedback and help participants feel supported.



MY MAIN QUESTION IS:

How do online support groups supports healthy lifestyles?





MY HYPOTHESIS



People who engage in an online support group are more likely to report finding it easier to maintain a healthier lifestyle.





MY METHOD



- **Online Survey-** I conducted a survey to conduct my research.
- **Who received it-** My survey was shared on facebook on two private support group pages for people looking to lose or maintain their weight.
- **Struggles-** Although anonymous my survey was not not as popular as expected.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

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1. I consider myself to be healthy
 2. My weight is at a healthy number
 3. I am motivated to live a healthy lifestyle
 4. I am motivated to maintain a healthy weight
 5. I make healthy choices everyday
 6. Physically I feel good about my weight
 7. Emotionally I feel good about my weight
 8. I am knowledgeable on how to make healthy choices to maintain my weight
 9. I am bothered when I make unhealthy choices that affect me maintaining my weight
 10. I try to move around everyday and not just sit to maintain a healthy weight
 11. I exercise everyday to maintain a healthy weight

1. I post(ed) on my social media support group daily
2. I find (found) the information I receive through my online support group to be relate-able
3. I find (found) the information I receive(d) from my online support group to be helpful
4. My online support group makes (made) me feel part of a group
5. My online support group is (was) more helpful to me than the people in my life
6. My online support group is (was) there for me when I need(ed) help
7. I feel (felt) motivated when I participate(d) in my online support group
8. I always read messages posted by others on my online support group
9. I reply(ied) to messages posted by others on my online support group
10. I feel like participants of my online support group know(knew) what I am(was) going through



MY FINDINGS

- People who participate in an online support group to lead healthier lifestyles do have more success. This means my hypothesis was proven.
- There are different ways to measure this hypothesis but I do believe more research can be done as different online support groups can be more successful than others.
- Other similar studies had similar outcomes.



THINGS TO WORK ON FOR NEXT TIME

- Would have been good to have a survey that allowed people who are not in an online support group to answer complete survey in order to have more concrete information
- Would want to find other ways to get participants as the online support groups was not the easiest way to get participants
- Would want to know what online support group they are part of to see how this affects the data
- Would need to have the answers from different sections change in order to make sure participants are answering to the best of their knowledge



RESOURCES

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- Williams G, Hamm MP, Shulhan J, *et al*. Social media interventions for diet and exercise behaviours: a systematic review and meta-analysis of randomised controlled trials, *BMJ Open* 2014;4:e003926. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2013-003926