

Abstract

Background: Evidence states 95-98% of individuals who undergo a diet for weight-loss purposes will gain back the weight within five years. *Local Problem:* No standardized method exists to assess weight-loss maintenance (WLM) behavior competencies in patients as they lose weight within a telehealth nutritional counseling private practice. Incorporating this assessment can be used to increase patient self-efficacy and predict a patient's likelihood of long-term weight success. *Methods:* Rapid cycle quality improvement using four plan-do-study-act cycles. Each cycle included tests of change related to team and patient engagement, implementation of a WLM assessment, and an audit adherence. Data were analyzed using run charts to evaluate the impact of interventions on outcomes. *Interventions:* The clinical team submitted a weekly WLM competency survey. A patient intake form was completed to identify behavior risks, followed by implementation of a WLM assessment in weekly follow-ups. A team adherence audit was completed and submitted every week. *Results:* Team WLM competency levels rose 32%, averaging at 82% at project conclusion. Completion of the patient intake form reached and held at 100% for the entire duration. Utilization of the WLM assessment peaked at 97%, correlating to increased behavior competence by 27.5% as he or she advanced. Team adherence gradually inclined, peaking at 100%. *Conclusions:* Patient screening forms and audit logs created a standardized process to collect, deliver, and better coordinate care. Findings suggest patients who embodied higher behavioral competence will have a greater likelihood of sustaining their weight results and become the successful 2-5% of weight maintainers.

Keywords: quality improvement, obesity, weight-loss, weight maintenance, behavior competency