



Delivering Digital Behavioral Weight Management Interventions in Rural Populations

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Obesity is a Significant Public Health Challenge for individuals Living in Rural Areas

- Rural communities experience substantial burden from obesity
 - Higher obesity rates
 - Greater prevalence of obesity-related chronic disease
- Effective evidence-based lifestyle interventions which target eating habits and physical activity patterns include weekly contact over 4-6 months
- Access can be a barrier
 - Few located in rural areas
 - Frequency of travel and distance

Research focus

How to reduce obesity-related health disparities among rural populations?

Digital Weight Control Approaches Attractive

Access

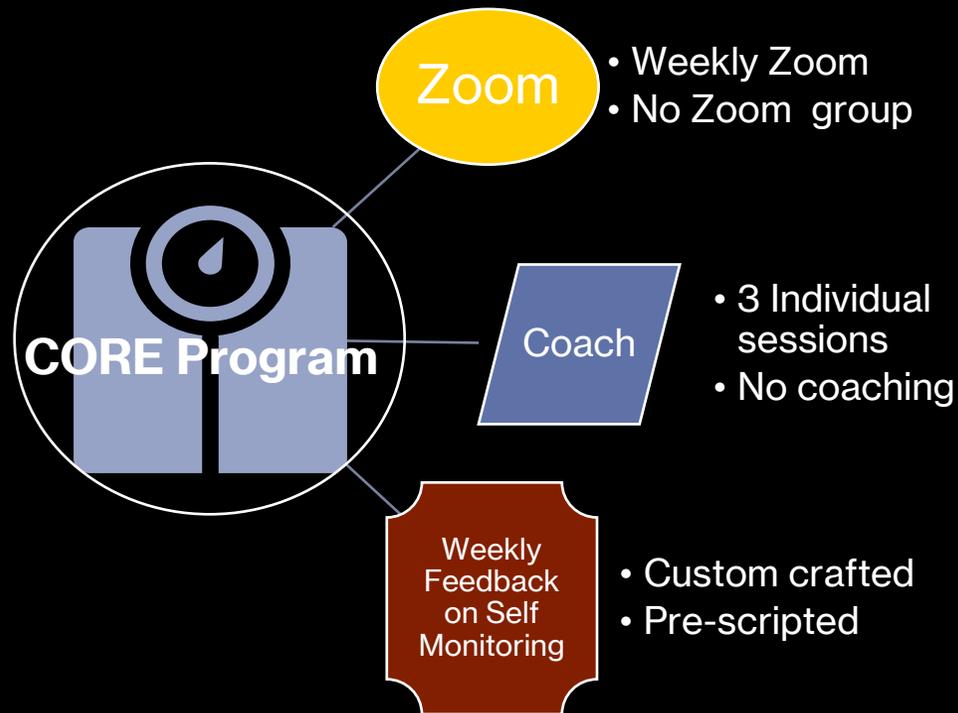
- Most rural areas have internet access
- Rural residents successful at losing weight in online lifestyle programs
- Digital programs eliminate travel to treatment center

Efficacy

- But digital interventions may not produce comparable weight losses to in-person
- “High touch” personnel-intensive treatment components often not included in digital programs
- Having a real person delivering treatment components may increase weight losses

But Which High Touch Component?

iREACH Examines 3 “High Touch” Components



Using a Factorial Design

- Refine the iREACH digital weight loss intervention to optimize weight loss outcomes for individuals living in rural areas
- Identify the component (or combination of components) that increase weight loss

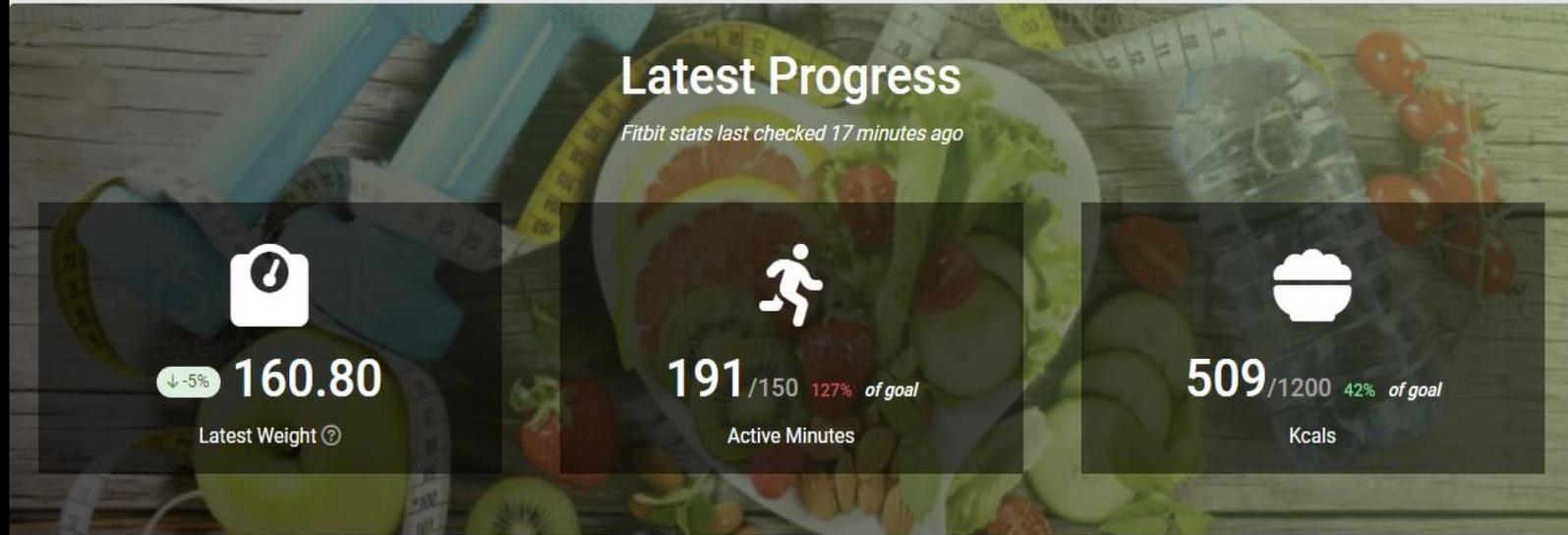




iREACH Rural Core Program

- Theory-guided 24-session program
 - Weekly interactive online video modules
 - Skills development activities
- Goal-directed
 - 7-10% weight loss
 - Calorie targets
 - Graded physical activity goals
- Daily self monitoring
 - Body weight via e-scale
 - Dietary intake on Fitbit app
 - Physical activity with tracker
- Group-based
 - Closed group of ~20 members
 - Private discussion board
 - Group facilitator

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Latest Module

Module 8: Problem Solving - Key Concepts

Overview

[Read More](#)

[→](#)

Discussion Topic

Eye on the Goal

Goals that work to support lifestyle behavior change

[Read More](#)

[→](#)

Lifestyle Tip

Time to reflect and reward yourself

[→](#)

My Group members

Names, pictures and emails of other group members provided here to encourage interaction

Upcoming Zoom Meetings

| | |
|--------|--|
| Mar 18 | <p>Monday, Mar 18</p> <p>5:00 PM</p> <p>Zoom Link</p> <p>Caryn Davis chdavis@uvm.edu</p> |
| Mar 25 | <p>Monday, Mar 25</p> <p>5:00 PM</p> <p>Zoom Link</p> |

Grant number DK135227

Tailoring to Reach Rural Populations: National Recruitment

- Digital recruiting channels
 - ResearchMatch
 - Boosted Facebook posts
 - Contact via direct email thru listservs
 - Rural Hospital Association
 - State Health Departments
 - Rural small and large media
- All enrollment procedures remote
 - Online portal to introduce study
 - Zoom screening to review eligibility and answer questions
 - REDCap online, secure consent form & questionnaires
 - “Smart Scale” for weight outcomes



The graphic features a central white diamond shape on a dark blue background. The top half of the diamond contains a photo of a man and a woman exercising outdoors with dumbbells. The bottom half contains a photo of hands chopping vegetables on a cutting board next to a laptop. The text 'Now Enrolling!' is written in a green cursive font. Below it, 'iREACH Online Weight Loss Study' is written in a bold, dark blue sans-serif font. A green rounded rectangle contains the text 'Learn More & Apply!' in white. At the bottom, a speaker icon is followed by the text 'Please turn on your audio'. The iREACH logo, which includes a stylized human figure and stars, is positioned on the right side of the diamond.

Now Enrolling!

**iREACH Online
Weight Loss Study**

Learn More & Apply!

🔊 Please turn on your audio

iREACH

<https://www.ireachstudy.org/>

Tailoring to Reach Rural Populations: Intervention Adjustments

- Dietary habit change
 - Dining out
 - Grocery store availability
 - Gardens
- Physical activity promotion
 - Limited access to parks/green spaces, walkable destinations and exercise facilities
 - Safety of physical activity in rural areas
- Social support
 - Limited in rural areas
 - Seek to build within group



iREACH Rural is Currently Ongoing



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- We hope to return to this group for the big reveal of study findings
- Suggestions for recruitment channels welcomed
 - Anyone with creative ideas encouraged to share
 - Investigative team seeks rural contacts to engage
- Students interested in rural lifestyle interventions and/or digital delivery of weight control programs are invited to reach out to the investigative team to explore opportunities

Thank you!



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