

# MAINTAINING HEALTHY BEHAVIORS FOLLOWING WEIGHT LOSS: A GROUNDED THEORY APPROACH

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*This study explored the process of how women maintained their healthy behaviors after a weight management program using a grounded theory approach. We conducted 2 focus groups and 23 interviews with a purposeful sample of African American and Caucasian women aged 30 and older who lost > 5% of their body weight during a weight management program 1 year ago or longer. Systematic data analysis included open, axial, and selective coding. Categories emerged during open coding and were connected during axial coding; categories were integrated to form a theory during selective coding. The substantive theory was labeled “Approach to Healthy Eating” and represented the women’s journey toward a healthy lifestyle. These findings are discussed along with suggestions for implementing behavior changes.*