



**LIFESTYLE COACH EXPERIENCES DELIVERING THE NATIONAL DIABETES  
PREVENTION PROGRAM TO DYADS**

**Tali Bauman (Katherine Baucom)  
Department of Psychology**

**Introduction**

As Type 2 Diabetes has become a leading cause of death in America, the CDC has implemented a year-long lifestyle intervention called the National Diabetes Prevention Program, or NDPP. The program aims to reduce diabetic incidence among high-risk individuals through two primary goals: 1) increase physical activity and 2) attain a 5-7% body weight loss.

Major lifestyle change is highly effective in lowering Type 2 Diabetes incidence, but has proven to be incredibly challenging for participants to succeed in the program. The NDPP has suffered from low rates of success due to barriers that hinder program engagement, participant retention, and goal attainment.

Because major lifestyle change can be so difficult, we hypothesize that participants may be more likely to maintain involvement and success in the program if another person who is close to them is incorporated in the intervention. On-going research in the HEART Lab in the Department of Psychology is focused on adapting the NDPP to be delivered as a couple-based intervention, because we know that those around us can help or hinder our attempts to improve our lifestyle. Below I summarize a manuscript I contributed to as part of the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program.

**Purpose**

While there is an urgent need to better understand implementation of the NDPP, there have not yet been any in-depth assessments of the perspectives of Lifestyle Coaches who deliver the program.

The goal of this study, which I summarize based on a manuscript that is in press (Baucom et al., in press), was to collect and summarize NDPP Lifestyle Coaches' experiences and challenges with delivering the program to dyads.

**Methods**

**Participants:**

From a larger sample ( $n=305$ ) of Lifestyle Coaches with experience teaching at least one in-person, year-long NDPP cohort at a CDC-recognized organization, ( $n=253$ ) participants experienced working with dyads in the program.

### **Measures:**

Coaches were emailed the study information, along with a screening form to ensure eligibility. An online survey was developed using the Social Determinants of Health framework. The survey included items on:

- Lifestyle Coach demographics and experience
- Experience delivering the NDPP to dyads (e.g., friends, family members) and
- Benefits & challenges associated with delivering NDPP to dyads

The benefits and challenges Lifestyle Coaches reported were coded using Qualitative Description, with similar codes grouped into categories.

### **Results**

The overwhelming majority of Lifestyle Coaches ( $n=210$ ; 83%) reported delivering the NDPP to dyads, such as family members or friends. The most common category of observed benefits to a dyadic approach was the opportunity to partner with a close other in lifestyle change. This included reports of improved general support, accountability, and increased understanding of lifestyle change.

Lifestyle Coaches described superior outcomes and increased engagement for participants in dyads. This included greater success in lifestyle change, greater motivation or commitment, and increased participation in class. Positive “ripple effects” to the other dyad member, broader family, and other members in the NDPP class were also described by Lifestyle Coaches.

Lifestyle Coaches observed minimal to no challenges related to a dyadic approach. Challenges included difficult relationship dynamics, differences between members of the dyad, and logistical barriers, such as conflicting schedules

### **Conclusion**

Lifestyle Coaches described benefits to participant engagement and improved outcomes for participants who went through the program with a close other. This project highlights the significant impact close relationships have on lifestyle change as well as the potential benefits of a couple-based lifestyle intervention.

Additional details on this study can be found in Baucom et al. (in press).

### **References**

Baucom, K.J.W., Bauman, T., Nemirovsky, Y., Gutierrez Chavez, M., Aguirre, M.C., Ramos, C., Asnaani, A., Gutner, C.A., Ritchie, N.D., Shah, M., & Clark, L. (in press). Promises and pitfalls of dyads in the National Diabetes Prevention Program: Lifestyle coach perspectives. *American Journal of Health Promotion*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08901171221088580>