



How to Tell a Friend, “You Need to Lose Weight”

Structure House launches unique tool to help people discuss weight loss with loved ones

DURHAM, N.C. (February 7, 2011) — The nation’s obesity epidemic is growing and impossible to ignore, however, most people struggle to discuss weight loss with a family member or friend. There is a fear of hurting someone you love or losing a friend. Compounding the problem, physicians oftentimes avoid telling a patient to lose weight in order to avoid a potentially negative or unwelcome discussion.

A study conducted during National Obesity Week 2010 revealed that one out of five women are afraid to tell a close friend she needs to lose weight, and only a small portion of those that are not afraid can muster the courage to actually have the conversation. Obesity is a serious health issue and the stigma preventing those from talking to a loved one, could do more harm than good.

“It is not easy to talk to a friend about weight management,” said Dr. Gerard J. Musante, obesity expert and founder of weight loss facility [Structure House](#)[®]. “When a loved one’s health is at stake, your willingness to speak up and show how much you care could make all the difference in the world.”

Dr. Musante shares some basic tips to help start the conversation about living a healthier lifestyle.

- Turn to the Internet for conversation-starters. Forward your friend a relevant article about weight loss or potential health risks. Email information about reputable weight loss treatment options that would be a good fit for his or her lifestyle.
- Focus on the importance of your friend’s health and long life and avoid comments about vanity or appearance.
- Offer to support your friend’s weight loss endeavors by planning times to exercise and prepare healthy meals together.
- Consider setting reasonable milestones and reward your friend’s success with a shopping trip to buy new clothes.
- Above all, be sensitive and caring toward your friend. This could be a dreaded and painful discussion for them.

“Many people do not know how to start a conversation about weight loss,” said Musante. “We recently launched a [Refer-A-Friend](#) option on the Structure House website to provide a compassionate means of opening the door to someone who needs help. They are likely aware of their condition and support from a trusted friend could put them back on the path toward a healthier and happier future.”

Structure House is a premier weight management treatment program in Durham, North Carolina. The online [“Refer-A-Friend”](#) feature is designed to help people start a life-changing conversation with someone about weight loss. A series of four informational postcards can be emailed anonymously, or with a personal message, including details about programs for weight loss, diabetes, surgery and a weekend retreat.

About Structure House

[Structure House](#)[®], an internationally recognized residential weight management treatment facility in Durham, N.C., offers a unique, behavioral approach to weight loss and healthy lifestyle change. The program, recognized by *Health* magazine as “America’s Healthiest Diet,” integrates principles of nutrition and exercise with psychology in a treatment approach designed to transform the eating habits and lifestyles of overweight individuals. Structure House also offers a specialized Diabetes Program, pre- and post-surgery support, intensive weekend retreats and an online program for weight loss.

Since 1977, Structure House has helped more than 30,000 people from all 50 states and 35 nations battling obesity. The name Structure House underscores the critical role structure plays in achieving long-term weight loss. Structure House is a proud member of CRC Health Group, the nation's leading provider of behavioral health and addiction treatment services.

Gerard J. Musante, Ph.D., one of the nation's leading experts on obesity and weight loss, is the founder of Structure House. A renowned clinical psychologist, Dr. Musante was the first person to adapt the principles of behavior modification to the eating habits of significantly overweight people and food abusers. Dr. Musante is the author of [The Structure House Weight Loss Plan](#).