Come Sail the Seven C’s With TOPS and Avoid the Deep Blues

Inspired by TOPS GA 0279 Douglas

Introduction
Have you ever dreamed of going on a journey, or maybe taking a cruise? As you were daydreaming, did thoughts of “Too bad I can’t leave my work, kids, spouse, aging parent, etc. long enough to go on one,” or “Too bad I could never afford a trip like that” surface? Well, the weight-loss journey can be like that at times, too. Instead of sailing the seven seas, we focus on the setbacks, the challenges, the wailing winds and the sharks in the water.

Today, we’ll talk about sailing the “Seven C’s” with TOPS:

1. Control
2. Change
3. Challenge
4. Consistency
5. Community
6. Compassion
7. Commitment

We’ll also talk about sharks in the water that may be giving us the deep blues:

1. Hopelessness
2. Worthlessness
3. Sadness
4. Loneliness
5. Isolation
6. Depression
7. Apathy
8. Low self-esteem

Materials
- writing utensil and paper for each member
- copies of this program

Preparation
Read through the program to familiarize yourself with the content prior to presenting. If using the contest idea at the end of this program, discuss and decide upon a prize as a group before starting the contest. Be sure to have the Secretary write down the Seven C’s contest rules decided by the group.

Funny thing about sharks and sails—a shark fin is roughly the same shape as the sails on a sailboat. Fins help sharks to navigate the waters. Sails on a boat pick up energy from the winds in the ocean, and the stronger the winds, the more energy and power the boat has to continue on its journey. The fin and the sails both work to take advantage of the surrounding environment to move forward. I wonder how many of us may be riding a shark, letting feelings of hopelessness, worthlessness, sadness, loneliness or apathy determine how we navigate through life. We’ve probably all been there at one time or another. But today, are we ready to sail the seven C’s and let the winds of commitment, compassion, consistency and community be our guides? And if so, how do we get out of the deep blues and hop a ride to our weight-loss destination?

Swimming With Sharks
Let’s take a minute to think about the sharks that may be keeping us from moving forward and enjoying the ride.
This banner, created by TOPS GA 0279 Douglas, not only inspired this program, but also took first place in a contest at Georgia State Recognition Days in 2017. Weigh to go!

(Give members a minute or two to think about it and write down what’s holding them back. Then allow a few more minutes for sharing.)

Turn Your Sharks Into Sails

Now that we know what’s holding us back, let’s take a few minutes to think about how we can turn our sharks into sails. Sometimes, just thinking about the situation differently helps us to move forward. For example, if you’re feeling worthless because of your weight, instead of focusing on that, perhaps you could focus on the community, compassion and support you find at chapter or through family and friends.

(Allow members a few moments to think about how they can turn their sharks into sails. Then allow a few minutes for sharing.)

Follow-Up

I hope we can all take some time this week to think more about this topic and to remember that we can choose to think more positively about ourselves and our situation anytime we catch ourselves riding a shark into the deep blues.

What we just did is an example of counterthinking. By reframing how we think about our journey and ourselves, we can find new ways to move forward. If you’d like to learn more about counterthinking, you can read page 158 in our TOPS lifestyle guide, Real Life: The Hands-on Pounds-off Guide. We should have a copy here at chapter for any member to review.

Contest Idea

If you’d like, your chapter can make a contest by assigning an action and a point value to each of the Seven C’s. Examples include: Control—Take a picture of your portion-controlled dinner for 1 point; Consistency—Plan a week of main meals for 3 points; or Change—Lose weight for 5 points. Decide how long the contest will run and choose a prize for the member or members who complete the most Seven C’s tasks by the end. Use total weight loss during the contest period as a tiebreaker.