

## HOW does the environment influence our health?

Cues in our environment can have a strong influence on our behaviors. There are many cues at home, work, and in our broader environment that affect our food choices, activity levels, stress levels, and overall health.

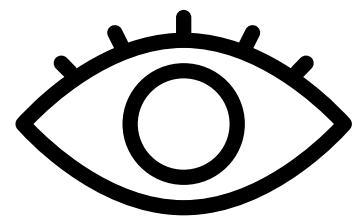
These cues might include:



Organization of the home



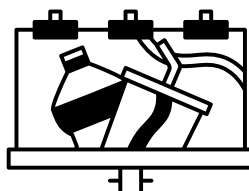
Availability of food options



Sights, smells, and sounds



Access to safe places for physical activity



Presence of advertisements promoting behaviors



Overall design of neighborhoods and workplaces

**Understanding the connection between our behaviors and the environmental influences can:**

- Empower us to make changes to cues that are within our control
- Help us navigate cues that aren't within our control.

# HOW can I change cues in my home environment?

It can sometimes seem like our environment is structured to promote unhealthy habits. However, there are things that you can do within the environment that you have control over so that it supports your goals instead of working against you

## IDENTIFY UNHELPFUL CUES

- Think about what cues cause you to overeat or make unhealthy choices. In addition to the sight and smell of food, often certain activities have been paired with eating and have become cues.



## REMOVE UNHELPFUL CUES FOR EATING

- Get rid of low-nutrient foods in your home or keep them out of sight
- Remove low-nutrient snacks from your office
- Keep low-nutrient foods in the back of your fridge or cupboards—better yet, don't even bring these in your home!



## ADD HEALTHY CUES FOR EATING

- Bring home fruits and vegetables and keep them in an easily-visible place
- Store nutrient dense snacks in your desk at work
- Keep ready-to-eat carrots and cut-up fruit in your refrigerator



## REMOVE UNHELPFUL CUES FOR INACTIVITY

- Hide the remote or consider getting rid of your TV altogether
- Designate “no-gadget” times in your schedule where you keep your phone, computer, TV, iPad, etc. out of sight and out of mind
- Adjust your route at work, the mall, etc. so that you encounter stairs rather than elevators



## ADD HEALTHY CUES FOR ACTIVITY

- Keep your exercise shoes, bag, or equipment in sight (not in the closet)
- Make a regular appointment to be active—put it in your planner
- Post motivational reminders in a visible place
- Set your homepage to your favorite YouTube workout account or healthy living blog



# HOW can I navigate environmental cues in our broader environment?

We may not always be able to control or remove unhealthy influences in our larger environment. We might consider creatively adapting to environmental influences by:

Exploring Community Resources

Offering Suggestions for Improvement

What community resources in **Petersburg** can help you reach your health goals?



## WALKING TRAILS

- Pamplin Historical Park
- Richard Bland College
- Appomattox River Park
- Legends Park
- Albert W Jones Athletic Field
- McKenzie Street Park
- Petersburg Sports Complex



## LOCAL VENDORS FOR FRESH PRODUCE

- Farmer's Market at River Street Market
- Goodr Mobile Grocery Store
- PHOPs Pop-Up Markets at the Petersburg Public Library

What other resources exist within your community that might help you reach your goals?

# HOW can I make change at the community level?

Although changing environmental influences at the community level can take more time, it is worth doing! Consider how you can advocate for changes to make your community a place that not only promotes health, but makes it accessible for ALL Petersburg residents.

## Here a few ideas:

### Advocating at town hall meetings for:



Bike lanes

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Walking safety features like sidewalks, crosswalks, lights, and pedestrian traffic lights

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Enhancing parks and recreation facilities

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Implementing urban gardening initiatives

### Partnering with local organizations to:



Develop a community garden

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Create recreational sport leagues

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Volunteer to support the maintenance/upkeep of a local park.

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Promote local farmers' markets

Exploring building supportive networks within our communities might strengthen our ability to create lasting changes. Each step towards considering creating healthier environments could contribute to a brighter future for ourselves and our communities.

# Set yourself up for **SUCCESS**



Continue to explore the cues in your environment that influence your eating, physical activity, and stress to identify where you can make adjustments. Make sure that you don't just focus on environmental influences that pose a challenge, but think about the strengths around you that can help you make choices aligned with your values.

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Try to set up cues in your environment that make sticking to your goals the EASY choice.

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Identify one action or goal related to changing the cues in your environment that you can commit to this week

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Reflect with your house chat group on how you can work together to make changes to cues at the community level.

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Remember, to approach these actions with kindness and flexibility, knowing that progress takes time and effort!