Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP) Improves Lives in Louisiana

The Stanford Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP) helps participants learn self-management skills needed to help deal with the symptoms of their chronic condition and with the life role changes and emotions experienced when living with a chronic condition. The emphasis of the workshop’s curriculum is to help people: manage common problems such as fatigue; communicate with friends, family, and providers; deal with anger and depression; and design and maintain a healthy eating and exercise plan. In addition, participants learn disease related decision-making and problem solving skills. The most important outcome of the CDSMP is that, through this practice and group feedback, people become more confident and are able to combine more active lives with self-management of their chronic health condition.

Older Adults Are More Likely to Have Multiple Chronic Conditions

- The prevalence of multiple chronic conditions increases with age.
- One in 5 children has multiple chronic conditions.
- Almost three out of four people ages 65 and older have multiple chronic conditions.

The Louisiana Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs has offered CDSMP, through Administration on Aging support including the Recovery Act Chronic Disease Self-Management Program grants. From May 2010 through February 2012, over 500 people have participated in federally funded Your Life Your Health CDSMP workshops in Louisiana. Most of those people live with multiple chronic conditions including arthritis, diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, lung disease, depression and others.

CDSMP is being implemented by master trainers and lay leaders (often community volunteers) in 19 local organizations through the Louisiana Governor’s Office of Elderly Affairs in collaboration with the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals. The local sites include Area Agencies on Aging, community health clinics, retirement centers, senior apartment communities, recreational facilities, senior centers, churches, worksites, and others.
CDSMP participants in Louisiana have shared their thoughts about CDSMP:

“Well if we are honest we would say who in their right mind wants to learn how to live with chronic conditions. But life is full of challenges and with challenges comes choices. Choices that people make every day. As soon as you awake in the morning we have the choice to get up or give in to our feelings and that of course is to stay in bed. But you know we must take control of our lives. I heard that sometimes you have to let life turn you upside down so you can learn to live right side up. That’s where people like Oscarlene and Betty who came to us because they saw a need. They had previously taken this workshop and decided to share it with their neighbors. That’s what you call paying it forward. For the last six weeks we could have been sitting around having pitty parties. These two ladies thought if it helped them it could help someone else. We talked about depression, our last wishes. We learned how to re-focus our mind away from pain. We discuss long term plans that would help us with future fears. The knowledge I have gained during these six weeks has greatly enhanced my ability to deal with the condition.”

-Mary Louise, CDSMP participant

“The workshop was a wonderful resource for people living with any chronic disease. It was very informative, educational, motivating, and taught us how to overcome and self-manage the physical and emotional problems people with chronic diseases face every day.”

- Johnnie, CDSMP participant

“A six week course "Living a Healthy Life with Chronic Conditions” was offered by the Jefferson Council on Aging and the result was a success. I would like to express my appreciation. A group of 10 diverse women gathered at 9a.m. on Mondays and were encouraged to not only think, but act. (starting with the first meeting) The teaching and brain-storming, the humor and compassion, were directed by Leslie Ann Cioti and Sharon Buchert in such a way that the directions to take for ourselves became manageable. We learned that motivation comes with a plan and the specifics are in our control. The aim is just to get it done. Sounds simple, but if you haven’t been so aware of self discipline, you need practice to keep it simple. We all seemed to enjoy the process of learning this. Thank you for this opportunity to share our experiences with one another and to meet Leslie Ann and Sharon.”

- Carla, CDSMP participant

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