



About the program

The Chronic Disease Self-Management Program is a workshop consisting of one 2.5-hour session held once per week over a six-week period. Workshops are held in community settings such as senior centers, churches, libraries and hospitals and include participants with different chronic health problems attending together. Workshops are facilitated by two trained leaders, one or both of whom are non-health professionals with chronic diseases.

Subjects covered over the course of the Program include: 1) techniques to deal with problems such as frustration, fatigue, pain and isolation; 2) appropriate exercises for maintaining and improving strength, flexibility and endurance; 3) appropriate use of medications; 4) communicating effectively with family, friends and health professionals; 5) nutrition; and 6) how to evaluate new treatments. Each participant in the workshop receives a copy of the companion book, "Living a Healthy Life With Chronic Conditions" (3rd Edition), and an audio relaxation tape, "Time for Healing."*

It is the process in which this Program is conducted that makes it effective. Classes are highly participative, where mutual support and success build individual participants' confidence in his or her ability to manage their health and maintain an active and fulfilling life.

Does the Program replace existing programs and treatments?

The Self-Management Program will not conflict with existing programs or treatment. It is designed to enhance regular treatment and disease-specific education such as Better Breathers, cardiac rehabilitation, or diabetes instruction. In addition, many of the participants have more than one chronic condition. The program is especially helpful for these people, as it gives him or her the skills to coordinate all the things needed to manage their health, as well as to help them keep active in their lives.

How was the Program evaluated?

More than 1,000 people with heart disease, lung disease, stroke or arthritis participated in a randomized, controlled test of the Program, and were followed for up to three years. Changes in many areas were monitored: health status (disability, social/role limitations, pain and physical discomfort, energy/fatigue, shortness of breath, psychological well-being/

distress, depression, health distress, self-rated general health); health care utilization (visits to physicians, visits to emergency department, hospital stays, and nights in hospital); self-efficacy (confidence to perform self-management behaviors, confidence to manage disease in general, confidence to achieve outcomes); and self-management behaviors (exercise, cognitive symptom management, mental stress management/relaxation, use of community resources, communication with physician, and advance directives).**

What were the results?

Subjects who took the Program, when compared to those who did not, demonstrated significant improvements in exercise, cognitive symptom management, communication with physicians, self-reported general health, health distress, fatigue, disability, and social/role activities limitations. Subjects also spent fewer days in the hospital, and there was also a trend toward fewer outpatient visits and hospitalizations. These data yield a cost to savings ratio of approximately 1:4. Many of these results persisted for as long as three years.***

*Both "Living a Healthy Life With Chronic Conditions" (3rd edition) by Lorig, Holman, Sobel, Laurent, González and Minor (2006), and the "Time for Healing" audio tape by Catherine Regan can be ordered from Bull Publishing.

**A complete report on the measures used and their psychometric properties can be found in Outcome Measures for Health Education and Other Health Care Interventions, by Lorig, Stewart, Ritter, González, Laurent and Lynch, Sage Publications, 1996.

***Outcome data reported in: Lorig KR, Sobel DS, Stewart AL, Brown Jr BW, Ritter PL, González VM, Laurent DD, Holman HR. Evidence suggesting that a chronic disease self-management program can improve health status while reducing utilization and costs: A randomized trial. *Medical Care*, 37(1):5-14, 1999.

Lorig KR, Ritter P, Stewart AL, Sobel DS, Brown BW, Bandura A, González VM, Laurent DD, Holman HR. Chronic Disease Self-Management Program: 2-Year Health Status and Health Care Utilization Outcomes. *Medical Care*, 39(11),1217-1223, 2001.

In HMO setting: Lorig KR, Sobel DS, Ritter PL, Laurent D, Hobbs M. Effect of a Self-Management Program on Patients with Chronic Disease. *Effective Clinical Practice*, 4(6),256-262, 2001.

