

Living a Healthy Life with Chronic Illness

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Our patients are usually riding a Roller coaster...

Illness can be a time of heightened tension & anxiety

Informed

Overwhelmed

Ready

Anticipating

Sad

Vulnerable

Tired

Disbelief

Fear

Anxious

Stress

Prepared

Cautious

Angry

Hopeful

Numb

Reactions to Illness

Different people, different reactions. -
between patients and within families

The shock of the news or physical
changes can bring reaction very like
grieving process

Common Reactions

- Denial - "I don't want to think about it" ... "I didn't think it would come to this"
- Anger - positive and negative coping strategy
- Fear
- Depression

'Expert Patient' Vision:

Decision Making Compliance
Self Esteem
Quality of life Less Dependence
Understanding their illness
Pain/Symptom Management
Stable illness, less crises
Coping skills

- DoH, UK "The Expert Patient, a new approach to chronic disease Management for the 21st century"

Self Management

- Prof Katie Lorig, Stanford Univ California
- Expert Patient Programme, NHS - arthritis. Now v.popular in Primary care service, all chronic illnesses
- How can illness = healthy life????
- Becoming your own 'Expert' or Self Manager
- Gaining back a sense of control

Health = body & mind

Learn to manage our symptoms and our emotions so that we can achieve greatest physical capacity and pleasure from life

Thoughts about your Illness

The thoughts you have can greatly determine what happens to you and how you handle your health problems

Successful self managers think of their illness as a path

We need skills to negotiate the path with:

- skills to deal with the illness
- skills to continue your normal life
- skills to deal with the emotions

Skills to deal with your illness

1. Learn about your illness

??What causes it - What makes it worse - What makes it better??

You are the only one who lives with your illness daily so.....

Observe your illness so that you can accurately report to your
medical team

Keep a daily or weekly journal

Join the Patient advocacy group and begin to meet others

2. Manage your Medication

Think about the beliefs you have about taking medicine

Associate healthful images with your medications

Imagine that the medication is helping you

Keep in mind why you are taking the medication

Keep a journal or diary - write it down!

3. Learn to communicate with your Health Care Team

P - Prepare

A - Ask

R - Repeat

T - Take Action

Skills to continue your normal life

1. Eat Healthy

2. Sleep!

Quality & quantity have direct relationship to our mood and time for our body to heal

3. Finances/Work

Think about work, finances

4. *Be Active* (Exercise)

Happy hormones / Stress relief

Flexibility - joints and muscles keep us moving

Strength - use or loose muscle tone

Endurance - exercise your lungs and heart to keep them fit

5. *Stay involved* -

Be social, keep working, make time for treats, find a hobby you can do sitting down

Skills to deal with your emotions

1. Reflection

Try to get to know your emotions - why, when, who, what

2. Prepare ahead

Think through a situation that causes x type of emotion, visualise/talk through how you want to handle it ahead of time

3. *Communicate*

Use "I" instead of you

Try to avoid going off on tangents

Stay calm - breathe, its hard to help an angry person

Be open & honest

Check your expectations against the other persons

Accept the feelings/thoughts of others

Ask for help

Show respect, regard, tact and courtesy

Use humour

4. Relaxation techniques

- Find a quite place & time during the day, 5-15 mins*
- Twice a day*
- Practice produces results!*

Muscle relaxation - body scan

Music tapes

Prayer, Meditation

Movement - stretching/Yoga

5. Cognitive Strategies

Distraction or 'attention refocusing' when symptoms or an activity is coming up that we find hard

Positive Self-talk

Rather than 'I can't'.. 'there's no point'

Thoughts are in our control and we have to practise positive self-talk for it to become a habit

Goal Setting

Before we leave, lets reflect.....

Informed	Anxious
Stress	Prepared
Cautious	Angry
Hopeful	Numb
Overwhelmed	Ready
Anticipating	Sad
Vulnerable	Tired
Disbelief	Fearful
In control	

- Where were you at the start?
- Where do you want to be?

Goal Setting - short term action plans