

For people with chronic health conditions, good medical care is just half of the equation. Equally important is their ability to make healthy decisions, follow their doctor's recommendations and take care of their condition.

The Living Well with Chronic Conditions Program is a six-week group education workshop that meets once a week for two and one-half hours for individuals with chronic diseases. This program teaches people the practical skills they need to live well with chronic health conditions. Chronic conditions are lifelong physical or mental health conditions and include anxiety, arthritis, asthma, chronic bronchitis, chronic pain, cancer, depression, diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, obesity and stroke. Through weekly sessions, the workshop provides support for continuing normal daily activities and dealing with the emotions that arise from having a chronic disease.

The Living Well with Chronic Conditions Program can help people take charge of their life and stop the condition from controlling their life. These workshops help people with chronic conditions make the most of their medical care and communicate more effectively with their health care providers. The workshop content complements ongoing programs or medical treatment and is designed to enhance regular medical treatment and disease-specific education. For people with more than one health problem, this program is especially useful because it teaches skills that help them address the challenges of living with multiple conditions.

Workshops are fun and interactive and are facilitated by certified leaders. Participants share their successes and build a common source of support. The workshop builds confidence around managing health, staying active and enjoying life. Family and friends are also welcome to attend the workshop.

There's a significant need for support for people with chronic diseases, which the Center for Disease Control and Prevention calls the most common, costly and preventable of all U.S. health problems. They are also the leading causes of death and disability, responsible for seven out of ten deaths each year, according to the CDC.

More than fifty studies since 1991 have found that people who take the Living Well with Chronic Conditions program generally have fewer symptoms such as depression and shortness of breath, have better quality of life, exercise more, and usually utilize health care less. This is a great incentive for employers to include self-management workshops as a health benefit to their employees.