

THE STANFORD UNIVERSITY CHRONIC DISEASE SELF-MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP JUNE, 2015.

The Stanford University Chronic Disease Self-Management workshop for leaders was held in St. Lucia from Monday 1st – Friday 5th June, 2015. Its objective was to train persons in Caribbean territories as leaders in self-management techniques so that they can assist people in their respective territories with chronic conditions to improve their health status.

The workshop attracted attendance from across the Caribbean. There were representatives from St. Vincent & Grenadines, St. Lucia, Montserrat, Anguilla, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts & Nevis and Antigua.



The program was intense as it sought to train attendees for certification as well as provide opportunity to reinforce the theory learnt with appropriate practical exposure. Each participant was given a manual as well as a text book “Living a Healthy Life with Chronic Conditions”. The manual emphasized thirteen (13) self-management techniques as follows:-

1. **Physical Activity**- Allows improvement in overall health. It means being active and not necessarily having a fixed exercise programme. However if there is a fixed exercise programme, the exercises can be done at intervals throughout the day.
2. **Medications**- Medication works in various ways. Some medications may have no noticeable effect, however, that does not mean that they aren't working.

3. **Decision-Making-** is a difficult task however listing the pros and cons and giving them a score between 1-5 and totaling them at the end. The one with the highest score is considered however if it does not pass the “gut test” then it is discarded.
4. **Action Planning-** The breaking down of goals especially life changing ones into smaller more manageable tasks.
5. **Breathing Techniques-** Using breathing exercises to strengthen lungs and improve overall health. It also helps to relieve stress, relax tense muscles and energizes the body.
6. **Understanding Emotions-** understanding what causes difficult emotions and how to deal with them.



7. **Problem Solving-** Identify problems that you may have, list possible solutions and pick a solution to try.
8. **Using Your Mind-** Your mind has influence over your body and can be used to help manage symptoms. Focusing on something other than the symptom or thought allows the feeling to be less intense.
9. **Sleep-** Having a good night’s sleep improves overall health. It is important to have quality sleep and not just quantity sleep.
10. **Communication-** Effective communication to others in terms of expressing feelings or concerns without getting upset, seeming to blame others or promoting defensiveness in others.
11. **Healthy Eating-** This improves overall health and how to make wise food choices using the plate method

12. **Weight Management-** and gives information on portion control as well as what should be eaten to maintain a healthy weight
13. **Working with Health Professionals-** the acronym “**PART**” (**Prepare, Ask, Repeat, Take Action**) was introduced. It identifies a list of steps that should be taken when consulting with your health care provider.

The knowledge was shared was invaluable and the teaching method used was effective in disseminating the information. Participants were unanimous in the program positive reviews and all look forward to certification. They were all resolute in their determination to secure national support in their respective countries – all participants were sold on the need to quickly implement these self-management techniques learnt from Stanford University. Although funding, some possible resistance and other competing programs were identified as likely challenges the concept of self-management is being seen as a welcomed addition in the control of chronic diseases.

Actions needed:

1. The attendees from the various territories should proceed towards certification by October, 2015. This would be achieved by the delegates conducting two self-management workshops each by September.
2. The Diabetes Association of Barbados as the agency representing Barbados and as a NGO is seen as being able to encourage and facilitate the timely certification of its representatives. It has a large membership from which participants can be drawn.
3. Build partnerships with government, faith based organizations and other NGO’s to target participation. This will also assist with funding and other resources.
4. Adopt a name by which to identify the program as a regional brand.
5. Present any requests for financial and resource report to PAHO by October

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