

A Brief Primer

“Near the end of a visit to my doctor, she handed me a pamphlet and asked me if I thought I might be interested in attending a self-management workshop that is offered in Alberta for people with chronic conditions. I was already in the 10th year of a diagnosis of Type 2 diabetes and at least 75 pounds overweight. I had been meeting with a dietitian and a nurse for about 18 months in an effort to get motivated to eat healthier and become more serious about exercise. But many years of “yo-yo” dieting and my unwillingness to accept that I was the only one who could make these changes, made me reluctant to believe that I would ever be successful.

The Better Choices, Better Health® workshop gave me new insight into what it means to have a chronic condition and provided me with new “tools” to help me become a more active participant in managing my condition.

Since attending the program, my weight continues to fall, my blood glucose control has improved dramatically, the medication I take for diabetes has been reduced, and I remain free of the complications often associated with diabetes and obesity, as I continue to apply not only the principles of healthy eating, but also those of self-management that I practiced during the Better Choices, Better Health® workshop.”

-Mary Ann Britt

The average person spends ~ 12 hours per year with health care providers. They spend 8,748 hours per year managing their condition independently.

Helping people with chronic disease learn to better manage their condition will help reduce the personal and societal burden of chronic diseases.

Evidence: Significant effect sizes for programs like Better Choices, Better Health™ persists over time:

↑energy ↑self-rated health ↑exercise
↑self-efficacy ↓depression ↓fatigue ↓pain

Effective self-managers:

- are informed about their disease,
- are actively involved in their total care,
- protect and promote their health,
- set goals and monitor progress,
- take action to adopt healthy behaviours,
- know when to initiate contact with the health system,
- apply problem solving and decision making skills to work through setbacks, and
- are able to manage the physical, emotional, and social effects their condition.

Better Choices, Better Health® A Patient Self-Management Intervention

Better Choices, Better Health® supports participants to put knowledge into action to better manage their health.

This free six-week program includes information on making healthy lifestyle changes, dealing with difficult emotions, developing communication skills, using medications, and working with their healthcare team.

Weekly interactive sessions combine health information with techniques to improve symptom management such as goal setting, problem solving, and relaxation. Participants learn and practice techniques to manage day-to-day challenges associated with chronic conditions.

This program is suitable for adults who have one or more chronic conditions, caregivers or adult family members, and people seeking to prevent chronic disease.

Better Choices, Better Health® is an internationally recognized evidence-based self-management program developed by Stanford University.

For more details and registration information, visit the Self-Management Support section of the Chronic Disease Management Resource Centre at

<http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/cdmresourcecentre>