



Advocacy. Action. Answers on Aging.

HOUSING & COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT OFFICE ON AGING

1300 S. GRAND AVENUE ♦ BUILDING B, 2ND FLOOR ♦ SANTA ANA, CALIFORNIA ♦ 92705

PHONE: (714) 567-7500 ♦ FAX: (714) 567-5021 ♦ TDD: (714) 550-9472

Living a Healthy Life with Chronic Conditions

Nobody wants to be ill even one day, much less to have a chronic illness which requires special concessions for a long period of time. "However, the majority of us will develop heart disease, diabetes, arthritis, emphysema, or another life-altering disease in our later years. These diseases cause people to lose physical conditioning and cause emotional distress such as frustration or helplessness. Health is the soundness of body and mind, and a healthy life is one that seeks that soundness. Therefore, a healthy way to live with a chronic illness is to work at overcoming the physical and emotional problems caused by the illness. The goal is to achieve the greatest possible physical capability and pleasure from life." So says Dr. Kate Lorig and her collaborative team from Stanford University, who created and continuously upgrade the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP).

In a five year research project, the CDSMP was evaluated in a random study involving more than 1000 subjects. The study found that people who took the program, when compared to those who did not take the program, improved their self-reported health status, and decreased their days in the hospital.

The CDSMP brings together 15-20 individuals each suffering from any chronic condition for six 2-hour sessions of interactive classes facilitated by a trained volunteer who, himself, has gone through the program as a sufferer from a chronic disease. The curriculum includes learning: how to deal with anger, fear, and frustration; how to set and follow through with healthy goals; how to communicate with health professionals; how to solve health-related problems; and how to make informed treatment decisions. Exercises are done in better breathing, relaxation techniques, and fatigue management. There are also lessons in how to manage medications, choose healthy foods, and exercise wisely. There is a great deal of discussion and interaction among the group members.

This extremely helpful program is offered free of charge by County of Orange Health Care Agency's Preventive Health Care for the Aging program and Talbert Medical Group, several times a year at various locations. If you think you or someone you know could benefit from this program, call and ask for the Health Educator at the County of Orange Office on Aging 1-800-510-2020.

For information and assistance for older adults, caregivers, or persons with disabilities, call the Office on Aging's Information & Assistance: **1-800-510-2020**.