

Program Overview

The Arthritis Foundation Self-Help Program, also known as the Arthritis Self-Management Program, was originally developed by Kate Lorig, DrPH at Stanford University and adopted by the Arthritis Foundation in 1981. It is now offered throughout Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United Kingdom. The program is a six-week series of classes, taught in a group setting by a pair of trained leaders (lay people with arthritis and health professionals). The standardized curriculum was developed on the basis of a needs assessment documenting the concerns of people with arthritis, such as pain, disability, fear, and depression. The course content focuses on what people need to know and do to address these arthritis-related problems, as well as generic skills such as how to use problem-solving skills

to adapt to changes in their disease activity and level of function. To achieve its positive results, the Arthritis Foundation Self-Help Program strongly emphasizes adult learning principles and group process techniques designed to foster behavior change and to improve self-efficacy (one's confidence or belief that he or she can achieve a specific behavior or cognitive state). Self-efficacy enhancing features includes people with arthritis as course leaders, weekly action plans, feedback, persuasion and processes to help participants change inaccurate beliefs. The Arthritis Foundation Self-Help Program is conducted over six weeks to allow participants adequate opportunity to practice new behaviors and skills.

Arthritis Foundation Self-Help Program Evaluation Studies At-A-Glance

Lorig et al, 1985

Randomized, pretest – posttest with 20-month follow-up (n=286).

Four month follow-up:

- ↑ knowledge and practice of self-management behaviors
- ↓ pain, reduced ~ 20%

20-month follow-up:

- ↑ knowledge and practice of self-management behaviors
- ↑ exercise
- ↓ percent reporting disability

Lorig et al, 1993

Longitudinal, randomized controlled trial with four year follow-up (n=343).

- ↓ pain, reduced 20%
- ↓ MD visits, reduced 40% with suggested cost savings of \$648 for RA participants and \$189 for OA participants

Kruger et al, 1998

Cost-effectiveness analysis.

- ↓ pain
- Cost savings from both societal and healthcare system perspectives (estimated to be \$2.5 million over 4 years with 10,000 participants)

Barlow et al, 2000

Randomized, pretest – posttest, four-month and 12-month follow-up design conducted in Great Britain (n=544).

- ↑ self-efficacy, cognitive symptom self-management, communication with physician
- Positive changes in diet and exercise
- ↓ depression
- Showed program was effective for non-American populations

References

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