

Self-Management of your disability

Experiencing symptoms of post-polio syndrome so many years after the affects of the original polio virus can be a difficult journey. Research articles indicate that one of the most important aspects of the maintenance of health in polio survivors is life style modification to adapt to your symptoms. Symptoms may be noticed gradually, and the maintenance of symptoms takes patience, strength and determination. Polio survivors must be **self-managers** of their health and life style.

What is self management?

You have been given the task of living well as a polio survivor – living well with a chronic (life-long) condition. Self management includes: **medical management; role management; and emotional managementⁱ**

Components of self-management

As a survivor, you have many components to contribute to your recovery:

- Problem solving skills
- Goal setting
- Social support
- Emotional health
- Individual assessment
- Links to community resources



How does self management help?

Self-management is a **decision** you make when faced with a chronic condition, such as post polio syndrome. Some people manage by withdrawing. Others stay in denial of their condition. Still others with similar symptoms somehow take action and manage to get on with their lives. Polio survivors must make the decision to live well and remember, “YOU are the manager”.ⁱⁱ

What can you do to help manage your condition?

- Join a support group
- Register for a self-management course about for chronic disease management
- Learn more about self-management and wellness
- Start setting goals and balancing your lifestyle

Components of Wellbeing

When thinking about self-management in regards to your health, a holistic, comprehensive approach is necessary. Consider these **six** areas of your healthⁱⁱⁱ.

1. **Physical** – taking care of your body through proper nutrition, activity and fitness
2. **Emotional** - becoming aware of how emotions affect your body and recognizing their effects
3. **Intellectual** - examining one's opinions and judgments, and the connections to life
4. **Spiritual** - developing a set of values, principles and beliefs that give a sense of meaning and purpose in life.
5. **Social** - creating and maintaining healthy, satisfying relationships that are mutually loving and supportive.
6. **Environmental** – creating an environment that is conducive to living well



What are you doing in your life to address EACH area of your well-being? Are there some areas that are being neglected? Take some time to really think about which area of your wellness needs some attention.

Resources

- Living a Healthy Life with Chronic Conditions: Self-Management of heart disease, arthritis, diabetes, asthma, bronchitis, emphysema and others. *Lorig. Kate et al. 2006. Bull Publishing Company*
- Wellness Workbook: How to achieve enduring health and vitality. *Travis, John M.D., Ryan, Regina Sara; 2004, Ten Speed Press*
- Post-Polio Syndrome: A Guide for Polio Survivors and Their Families. *Julie Silver M.D.; 2001, Yale University*

ⁱ South West Local Health Integration Network, Self Management in Theory and Practice: A guide for health care professionals. 2009

ⁱⁱ Lorig et al. *Living a Healthy Life with Chronic Conditions: Self-management of heart disease, arthritis, diabetes, asthma, bronchitis, emphysema and others.* 2006. Bull Publishing Company

ⁱⁱⁱ World Health Organization, 2009.