

Challenges and Lessons Learned by CDSMP Leaders

Lessons on . . . Preparing for Workshops:

Know Your Location

- Comfortable (padded) chairs are needed for a long class for people with chronic pain.
- Go to planned meeting site prior to seeing the site at the time you intend to have the class. The site may seem fine at any point of the day, but may have other barriers at the specific workshop time (meal times especially). If you do have an issue, quickly find another site/move the class or speak with management at the site.
- Ask where other classes are going to be held in your region.
- Location is critical –if a particular location is not working, change it.
- Be sure the location is comfortable and accessible.
- It can be difficult to offer a CDSMP workshop within a living community. Conversation can go off-topic and focus on issues within the community that don't relate to health or self-management of a chronic condition.
- Have a secure meeting space; lots of people in and out of the room can make it very hard to run the class. Ask partner to take over until meeting space can be secured.
- Call ahead to make sure room is set-up.
- Always make sure your location is closed off and you are not up against entertainment/music performers on the schedule.
- Make sure your location has a good set-up and is not in a shared space.
- Be familiar with the center before you have the workshop. Staff on-site may have a different viewpoint than administrators who don't see the day in/out of the site.
- Check for differing levels of ability for participants (e.g., a participant in a wheelchair) that would make their participation hard due to the location.
- Create a comfortable meeting space – know your building and room ahead of time.

Schedule Ahead of Workshop

- Time frame is hard for some people to get up early in the am. Consider offering both morning and afternoon sessions at the same site.
- If only one person signs up for the class, select another day at same location.
- Getting people to commit to come to class – Have sign-ups prior to holding a class to get enough people interested before scheduling a class.
- Participants who need classes in the evening – we have scheduled a 7:00-9:00 pm class.
- Class size is important for instruction.
- Participants need to sign themselves up. Individuals who have case managers or caregivers tend to not show up or be active participants. Focus on it being self-management including signing themselves up.
- Ask an employer for special permission for mid-day classes so as to not have after work.
- If you have over enrollment, shrink your class size (split into multiple classes if possible).
- Leave enough time for participants to make small talk – Did a lunch first and let talk.
- Advocate to organize classes within a specific organization.

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Lessons on . . . Preparing for Workshops (continued):

Market Your Workshop Well

- People would sign up but not realize time commitment. Be very specific in marketing by specifying class time/duration.
- Marketing strategies are key –earned media (local media sources, not paid for) works best as well as one-on-one conversations using clear descriptions.

Come Prepared to Lead

- Preparation is critical to the success of the class.
- People arrive early – be ready for class approximately 30 minutes before class starts.
- Be prepared for “any” response from a participant.
- Have a resource log of where folks can go to get more info regarding Advanced Directives and Mental Health.
- Plan ahead so you can end class at designated times.
- Use snacks to model healthy eating. Have all supplies for refreshments.
- It is necessary to post the charts listed in the Materials Section of your Leader Manual every session. Don’t just refer to them as needed.
- Make notes on items you request people to do.
- Know about modifications to the program for individuals of different ability before classes begin (e.g., there is an audio version of the book).
- If using door prizes or meal vouchers as an incentive for attendance, secure ahead of time.
- Bring mandatory supplies – pens/pencils/tape/paper (card stock), extra copies of materials.
- I think that I have forgotten to talk about the homework. I had to read the homework myself.
- Have the agenda written up and posted for all of the lessons. Look over session the night or morning before class.
- Never start the session alone – wait for your partner. Also, set-up at a time that is convenient for both leaders.
- Type up and hand out page numbers for the “homework” each week from the book.
- Challenge of paraphrasing for lecturette; I reviewed the material and used it to paraphrase it on index cards so that my lecturette goes smoother and has a more personal presentation.
- Take the session out of the huge leader manual and use it in a smaller folder to help not have to juggle a big notebook.

Utilize the Buddy System

- Forgetting to call all participants after the first class to check on their action plan. I write a reminder on my desk calendar.

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Lessons on . . . Preparing for Workshops (continued):

Utilize the Buddy System (continued)

- It is a challenge getting folks to come to six-2 hour courses. Have a buddy contact them and remind of session and/or personally call in the morning to remind of classes.
- Reminder calls before first session begins is crucial.
- It's best to call a participant for the weekly calls because it is nice to hear another's voice. However, communication (including email and/or texting) is the most important thing. What you work out with your partner is fine.
- If participants are not using the buddy system, re-state the guidelines (i.e., call buddy weekly), identify why they aren't participating (e.g., not a good fit between participants), suggest they use e-mail, suggest they pick new buddies each week, and/or suggest they ask a buddy outside of class (friend, family member, etc.).

Pay Attention to Transportation Needs

- Transportation has been an issue for several participants, especially if two people ride together to class. If one stops coming, they both do. Possibly suggest "buddy system" of other attendees that could help if it is known a participant relies on a ride to get to the workshop.

Lessons on . . . Public Speaking:

Be Energetic: Try and make the class a bit of fun.

Maintain Confidentiality: Make sure everyone understands that what is discussed (personal) in class stays in the class.

Speak Slowly and Clearly: As new leaders, we had a tendency to rush through the lectures. We learned to try to slow down and speak clearly so we were better understood.

Listen Carefully and Repeat: I learned to listen more closely and perhaps repeat back to be certain I understood comment correctly. **also:** Make sure you ask clarifying questions.

Importance of Body Language: Picking up on facial expressions – knowing areas of discussion that are possibly uncomfortable; knowing what to do when comments are made by a participant that offend another participant.

Fear Public Speaking? Challenge of overcoming fear of public speaking as a leader. Focused on the potential benefits the participants will enjoy after completing the workshop, relied on the script, prepared ahead of time, and let my co-leader know I was fearful (can be encouraging).

Pay Attention to How Much You Are Talking: Lessons I am continuing to learn teaching: talking too much myself.

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Lessons on . . . Public Speaking (continued):

It's Okay to Mess Up/Lose Your Spot: When brain stops working or you lose your train of thought during lectures, refer to the Charts when all else fails. **also:** If you make a mistake – relax; they don't know you have made a mistake unless you tell them.

Lessons on . . . Participation:

- Check in with your participants during breaks/before/after sessions to see what they're getting out of the courses
- Know what different types of people you may encounter in the workshop and how to manage these; each class is unique. Preparing for different types of people can improve your ability to lead courses.
- Try to get a mix of participants and encourage discussion when appropriate.
- Never underestimate people in your class – everyone does not behave the same way.

Dealing with the Different Types of People/Situations – The “Too-Talkative” Person

- If someone always wants to share stories, you could: move to the individual, encourage conversation at breaks, and work with your co-leader to address the issue.
 - If you have a person that likes to talk a lot, tell them the class may run overtime and you would like to continue the discussion at the break or after class.
 - Every now and then, you have a participant who has something to say about EVERY THING. Say, “Thank you (name) for your enthusiasm, but we are going to let someone else express their thoughts.”
 - If a participant is constantly going off on tangents having NOTHING to do with the subject at hand, you may want to wait for him/her to take a breath, and say “Okay, thank you, let's move along.”
 - I felt uncomfortable interrupting a “talker” the first dozen times, but got the hang of it by the second session.
 - It can be overwhelming to try to manage a “too-talkative”; work with your co-leader to work with the participant as well as involving others in the group.
 - Let everyone know they have a time limit and enforce it (during discussion and sharing).
 - Participants talked too much during class time. Attempted to get them back on track of topic and finally had to ask them to refrain from commenting.
 - Having people constantly talking among themselves with no regard to Leaders. Ask them to please stop talking because others may not be able to hear or respond.
 - If an individual with chronic disease and a caretaker attend together, request that a specific individual respond, even if one speaks over the other.
 - People love to talk about their pain, misery, and mishaps! I have learned more patience.
 - If you have a very talkative participant (attempting to talk with other participants while training is going on, place your hand on the talkative person's shoulder. Continue standing there and delivering the program, pausing whenever the talking resurfaces.
- Follow-up after the session.

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Lessons on . . . Participation (continued):

Dealing with the Different Types of People/Situations – The “Silent” Person

- Draw the quiet participant out and help them (talk to them during breaks, before and after).
- Utilize the buddy system to help engage shy participants.

Dealing with the Different Types of People/Situations – The “Non-participant”

- Some people really want to try to get better, but some do not care to try anything.
- Some people are not going to accept any help no matter what you may say or do to help them. Continue to accept the person where they are with their disease, and encourage positive thinking when appropriate.
- It’s okay to push a little bit when trying to help someone see their ability to change.
- Work around a person who does not want to participate in class.
- How can you help those that don’t seem to want to have help, and prevent them from bringing the entire group down? Don’t make them a focal point of the class.

Dealing with the Different Types of People/Situations – The “Angry or Hostile” Person

- If a participant is disrupting the class with his/her opinions, politely stop them and address the matter at break or after the session is done.
- Living with pain causes some people to be unfriendly. As a leader, recognize this.
- If there is a participant who is acting as a “Saboteur”:
 - Don’t make eye contact
 - Talk with them at break or after class
 - Thank them for their comment and move on
 - Remind them of the guidelines
 - Allow everyone to make one comment before you call on them again
 - Tell them you will give them a chance to share once you are finished with the segment
- If someone is very negative about everything, start talking about positive things that have happened, even if they are miniscule. Also smile and use positive gestures.
- Sometimes, a really emotional participant may try to blame their personal problem on the leader. Talk with the participant at break or after session about some of the benefits of the CDSMP course.

Dealing with the Different Types of People/Situations – Seeking Specific Answers

- Older adult wanting information about particular diet. Refer to physician for disease specific diets.
- The participant that asks for answers to medical questions wants advice? Defer back to physician brainstorm ideas on where to get answers.

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Lessons on . . . Participation (continued):

Dealing with the Different Types of People/Situations – The “Know-It-All” Person

- We had one person who diagnosed everyone’s problems. It’s okay to ask them to stop.
- Don’t let someone “take over” and give advice for everyone (a ‘know-it-all’).

Dealing with the Different Types of People/Situations – The Person Who Doesn’t Make Action Plans

- I had a lady who wanted to be organized and accomplish her goals on her action plan. She said her husband always had other plans during her action plan times, so she couldn’t do it. We brainstormed as a group about options that might work and were able to come up with a plan that she said worked for her.
- Recommend action planning as a strategy for many situations (in addition to chronic disease self-management).
- It’s hard to get individuals motivated to do an action plan and stay with it. Some participants may be negative about ways to help themselves.
- Had a participant who could not make action plan, because her doctor told her she could not exercise or change her diet. We asked her to talk to her doctor and also offered to talk to her on break.

Dealing with the Different Types of People/Situations – Participant Refers to Others/Does Not Want to Self-Manage

- Have had trouble with people talking about their friends, relatives. Ask them to just use themselves as examples.
- A participant may say they want to accomplish goals on their action plan, but may indicate that a family member or friend is impeding on their ability to do so. Brainstorm as a group!
- Encourage participants to sign-up and go to workshop for self.
- If an individual begins talking on behalf of another individual, ask how *they* feel about it, or what they would like to do to self-manage their emotions.

Dealing with the Different Types of People/Situations – Ability Levels of Participants

- It’s sometimes hard for older people to sit a long time – we would let them stand while the class would continue. Just explain to the group that it’s okay to be comfortable.
- Separate people with hearing aids if they are getting feedback.
- If individuals with impaired hearing continuously talk over others or about topics off hand, ask them if they can hear the group okay. You can arrange seating so that there are seats closer to and facing the leader for closer presentation. Read instead of using discussion for relaxation and guided imagery. Keep eye contact and face these people.
- Be sure the location is comfortable and accessible.
- Utilize the audio version of *Living a Healthy Life* . . . for individuals with sight concerns.

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Lessons on . . . Participation (continued):

Dealing with the Different Types of People/Situations – Lack of Participation/No Show

- If participants are not planning to return to remaining sessions, ask to return the book.
- If someone never shows up, try and contact them between sessions 1 and 2.
- If participants are not coming to class:
 - Reinforce the buddy system
 - Problem solve obstacles for coming and the benefits of coming
 - Talk with them at break or after class
 - Help them realize a larger goal they want to accomplish by coming
 - Arrange transportation if it's an issue
 - Review the closing activities to let them know what's coming up next week
 - Use incentives for attendance
- At one class, I lost two participants because they didn't feel their condition(s) were as bad as the rest of the class. I encouraged them to stay stating there was no severity level, etc. and that they could probably help others in the class greatly because of their experiences – they still did not continue.
- Leader or other participants can call and encourage individuals who have missed 1-2 classes because of their health condition to return to the next session.
- Don't start the session until you have enough participants and cancel if don't meet minimum enrollment.

Benefits for Participation in the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program

- I like how when we start the class, they are not sure if they like it, but after six weeks they are glad they came and learned some ideas.
- Through my first teaching experience with this course, I have learned just how important each member of the class is and how they rely on one another.
- If your class wants to continue meeting, encourage someone to take the lead to set up the next first meeting, including collecting phone numbers or emails.
- Some individuals feel they are alone in dealing with chronic disease when they enter the course. CDSMP is helpful for learning that there are groups of people with the need for talk and support.
- People warm up when they are supported. I give empathy in a dramatic expression.
- Happiness can spread and sadness can be overcome through this program.
- Continue encouraging your participants to work at their self-management and celebrate even the smallest of victories.
- Participants overall are resilient, forgiving, and appreciative. They amaze and humble me when they open up and share about their lives, heartaches, and challenges. Hearing how they overcome challenges by using some of the CDSMP tools is the best reward as a leader. Over 6 weeks, we leaders get inspired as we see the positive changes in participants and in the groups interactions.

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