

Title of Intervention: A camp experience to teach coping strategies to adolescents with insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus

Intervention Strategies: Group Education

Purpose of the Intervention: To teach coping strategies for stress related to diabetes management

Population: Adolescents

Setting: Texas Lions Camp for Children with Diabetes; community-based

Partners: None mentioned

Intervention Description:

- Group Education: The curriculum for the camp was presented in small group settings (7-9 campers) by medical education staff in daily sessions lasting about one hour. Classes covered the following topics: identification of sources of stress, effects of stress on diabetes control and specific stress management techniques. Specific techniques that were described, modeled and practiced included the use of relaxation, imagery, physical exercise, problem solving and identifying negative automatic thoughts and cognitive distortions. The objectives for the curriculum were to identify stressors in one's own environment, list the effects of stress on general health and on diabetes control, demonstrate at least 3 stress management techniques and propose future strategies for managing stress. Given the limited duration of camp, stress management techniques were presented as a sampling of potential resources the campers might find useful. Campers received a workbook with detailed information about the different stress management approaches. The camper was exposed to a variety of different styles and was encouraged to learn more about techniques that were personally appealing.

Theory: Not mentioned

Resources Required:

- Staff/Volunteers: Medical education staff
- Training: Not mentioned
- Technology: Not mentioned
- Space: Room to conduct small group education sessions
- Budget: Not mentioned
- Intervention: Workbook, curriculum
- Evaluation: Ways of Coping Checklist

Evaluation:

- Design: Pilot study, one group, pre- and post-test
- Methods and Measures: In a session at the beginning of camp, adolescents completed the Ways of Coping Checklist and rated their perceived stress. At the end of camp the adolescents were provided a copy of the stressful situation identified at the beginning of camp but not their original responses. Campers were asked to rate what coping strategies they thought they would use in the future if the situation were to happen again. Each of the 67 items on the scale was a specific strategy that could be used to cope with stressful events. The respondent indicated whether or not that coping strategy was "not used a great deal", "used somewhat", "used quite a bit" or "used a great deal" in dealing with the identified situation. The subscales include problem-focused coping, detachment, seeking social support, focusing on the positive, self-blame, tension reduction, keeping to self and wishful thinking.

Outcomes:

- Short Term Impact: A comparison of stress ratings among the different types of situations revealed that campers who identified diabetes-related situations rated their stress as significantly greater than the others. Compared with the pre-questionnaire responses, by the end of camp the adolescents intended to use more problem-focused strategies and fewer detachment strategies.
- Long Term Impact: Not measured

Maintenance: Not mentioned

Lessons Learned: Although implementation of a teen camp requires creativity and flexibility, it can be very feasible to implement.

Citation(s):

Smith KE, Schreiner BJ, Brouhard BH, Travis LB. Impact of a camp experience on choice of coping strategies by adolescents with insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus. *Diabetes Educ.* Jan-Feb 1991;17(1):49-53.