



PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM

Shepherd Center's Peer Support Program is designed to provide recently injured individuals with an opportunity to meet and talk with others who are successfully coping with a spinal cord injury (SCI). These individuals have a wealth of information and experience to share with newly-injured patients. To talk with a peer supporter is to talk to someone who knows first hand about living with a spinal cord injury.

PROGRAM GOALS

The Peer Support program provides the following services:

- Provide role models to encourage patients to achieve greater levels of independence
- Demonstrate functional skills and activities previously thought impossible by the patients in an effort to encourage sensible risk-taking
- Share coping skills used to effectively deal with problems
- Serve as support so that patients/families feel less alone
- Share specific information on disability-related issues including: accessible housing, transportation, legal rights, community resources and social, emotional and architectural barrier removal

PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM SERVICES

The program provides personal support and direct assistance to families living with spinal cord injury. The program's personal support may involve discussing and sharing experiences on issues such as coping, attitudinal barriers, dating, body image, and sexual function.

Assistance may involve providing specifics about community information, resources and services. Issues

addressed through peer support are broad and cover many areas of spinal cord injury and successful adjustment. Some of these issues are:

- Activities of daily living
- Accessibility and mobility barriers
- Recreation and leisure
- Self-advocacy and resourcefulness
- Attitudinal barriers
- Sexual functioning
- Parenting
- Effective use of time and energy
- Attendant care
- Coping with self and body image
- Managing relationships and feelings
- Community resources
- Accessible housing scleroderma

Peer Support services can be provided in informal one-on-one sessions, functional demonstrations or in small groups. The method of service delivery is determined by the patient's/family's needs and preferences.

MATCHING PEER SUPPORTERS

After each patient's medical conference, the peer support coordinator talks with the patient about his/her interest in and potential benefits of Peer Support. Patients are matched with peer supporters who have a similar injury level. Age, sex and personal interests are also matched as closely as possible.

PEER SUPPORT MEETINGS

Support group meetings are regularly held each month at Shepherd Center and are open to the public. All groups meet at Shepherd Center unless noted below. For more information, call 404-350-7373.

Spinal Cord Injury Support Group

Meets the fourth Thursday of every month from 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Spinal Cord Injury Caregivers Support Group

Meets the fourth Thursday of every month from 7 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Spinal Cord Injury Support Group for Women

Meets the fourth Wednesday of every month from 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.

MS Support Group

Meets the second Saturday of every month from 10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Hispanic Peer Support Group (Spinal Cord Injury)

Contact Peer Support; see below for Peer Support contact information

Spinal Cord Injury Support via Phone/Email

If coming to Shepherd Center is not a possibility, the SCI Program can provide peer support over the phone or via email. For more information, call Peer Support at 404-350-7373.

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

Peer Support Program

Minna Hong: 404-350-7373
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Shepherd Center: 404-352-2020

Visit Shepherd Center online at www.shepherd.org