

Coping Skills Training: *Helping Youths and Their Families Deal with Diabetes*

The Challenge:

Young people who suffer from type 1 diabetes – and their parents – need help dealing with the special challenges of that disease. Coping skills also are needed by youths at risk for type 2 diabetes (30-50 percent of new type 2 cases now occur in the 9-19 age group).

The Goal:

Assure that targeted youths – those of middle school age – have better metabolic control, quality of life, self-efficacy and coping skills than those who have received conventional diabetes education.

An Innovative Solution:

Teach those with – or at risk for – diabetes to manage their lives in the context of the disease, rather than just how to manage diabetes behaviors to enhance self management.

Where To Learn More

Margaret Grey, DrPH, RN, FAAN
Dean and Annie Goodrich
Professor, Yale School of Nursing
100 Church Street South
New Haven, CT 06519
(203) 785-2393
margaret.grey@yale.edu

What It Is

- A 12-year-old, group-based (and now Internet-based) cognitive behavior intervention – established in New Haven, CT, by the Yale School of Nursing – designed and delivered by nurses, building on the standard of care in diabetes education.

What It Does

- Provides coping skills training that build communications and social problem-solving skills – improving peer, school, and family relationships and enhancing self-management. The program focuses particularly on youths in their early teens, helping to assure that negative behaviors are addressed before extensive damage is done to the child's health.

How It Stands Out

- Youths with type 1 diabetes had much better physical and mental health – such that, if sustained, would result in a 25 percent reduction in long-term complications, at a savings of millions of dollars.
- Diabetes prevention participants demonstrated trends in lower glucose and insulin levels. Health behavior outcomes showed trends toward better choices of foods, resulting in reduced risk of diabetes development.
- Parents and grandparents of targeted youths demonstrated improvements in overall health behaviors, including healthier nutrition choices, improved stress management skills, increased physical activity and improved interpersonal relations.
- The program's head, Dr. Margaret Grey, has augmented the effort with other work to reduce/prevent child obesity – including helping to establish a state-wide coalition of community leaders and public officials to address the problem via public policy and other initiatives.