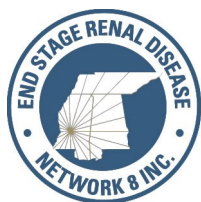


Support Groups

A support group is defined as a group of people with common experiences and concerns who provide emotional and moral support to one another. Support groups can be formal or informal. It is important to determine what would work best for you and the patients in your facility. Start by determining what is feasible, specify the amount of time you will spend implementing the group interactions, and select a specific topic to discuss with patients and initiate an engaging conversation with them. Below are some nontraditional suggestions to try.



1. Collaborate with other social workers in your area to see if there is interest in creating some type of support group. It can feel overwhelming when you think about the responsibility of implementing a group by yourself. If you have multiple social workers or other staff who are interested, the tasks could be divided and then assigned to a certain person. Start with a brainstorming session, (i.e. one person could find a speaker, one could find a place to hold a meeting, and one could create an agenda for the group). Breaking it down makes it more manageable. It also provides an opportunity for patients from different clinics to come together.
2. Try to facilitate conversations with multiple patients during shift change in the lobby while people are waiting on their transportation.
3. Schedule about 15 minutes of time to initiate conversation with patients together in the same bay or pod. Pick a topic and encourage interaction from the patients (i.e. the topic could be depression, and you could ask the patients to identify some signs/symptoms of depression).
4. Hold a “Town Hall Meeting” at the facility, and discuss different topics. Allow the patients to identify topics of interest to them. This could also be held in the lobby during shift change. You could schedule these quarterly, and use different themes to make it more fun and engaging.
5. Engage patients in activities inside and outside the facility. Patients could schedule monthly or quarterly lunch meetings to get together and discuss their concerns, or foster comradery among patients (i.e. Kidney Walks, Annual Picnics, seasonal gatherings, or themed lobby days).



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