



Objectives

To provide...

- An overview of support groups and agencies for heart failure and a rationale of how they contribute to optimal aging
- Examples of support groups and agencies for heart failure at the national and local levels
- Specific information about the “Mended Hearts” support group, to include:
 - Overview of services
 - Role in optimal aging
 - Contact information
 - PT role in advocating to the patient/family (How do you accomplish effective advocacy?)
- Examples of consumer-education material, to include:
 - Patient and family consumer-education material
 - An example for the PT clinic
 - Enhancing the current information available

What and Why

What are support groups and agencies?

- Support groups and agencies consist of attendees who all have a similar condition/diagnosis (i.e. heart failure) who meet to counsel and educate collaboratively.

Why provide support groups and agencies?

- Provide patients with a forum to share their concerns and needs
- Provide emotional comfort to patients in that they are not alone in their anxiety
- Provide educational sessions on how to manage heart failure (i.e. diet and exercise)
- Provide more informal discussions for patients to share their experiences



Rationale of Support Groups for HF Patients¹

- Over half of heart failure patients over the age of 65 are readmitted to hospitalization within 6 months of discharge
- Providing patients with a support group or agency decreases the percentage of readmitted patients and contributes to optimal aging
 - This is due to both the educational and emotional value support groups and agencies offer



Examples of Support Groups & Agencies

- National:
 - American Heart Association (AHA)²
 - National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI)³
 - American College of Cardiology⁴
- Local:
 - AHA: Greater Washington Region²
 - INOVA Heart and Vascular Institute⁵



Mended Hearts Support Group⁶

Mission Statement: *“Inspiring hope and improving the quality of life for heart patients and their families through ongoing peer-to-peer support.”*

Services

- Hospital Visiting
- Online Visiting
- Phone Visiting

Mended Hearts is a support group that patient’s with heart failure and/or family members join to assist with lifestyle changes, depression, recovery, or treatment.



Optimal Aging

What is optimal aging?

- Optimal aging is aging in its least restrictive form. Health care providers support optimal aging through evidence-based research, education, and the distribution of information.
- Support groups can help to provide optimal aging through group activities and events that improve physical, emotional, intellectual, social, and spiritual purpose in patients with heart failure.
- Mended Hearts provides various fitness programs and activities for optimal aging geared towards heart failure patients. Specific details can be accessed on the website.



Becoming a Member⁶

Eligibility:

- You must be a heart patient or the family member of a heart patient.
- You must complete the online application.

Fees:

- Annual
 - \$17 per person or \$24 per family
- Lifetime
 - \$150 per person or \$210 per family
- Additional
 - Local chapters may require dues that vary from \$3-\$17 annually



Quick Facts and Contacts⁶

Mended Hearts...

- Was started by Dr. Dwight Harken in 1951.
- Has over 300 local chapter and satellite locations across the nation.
- Partners with over 460 hospital and rehabilitation centers.
- Has over 18,000 members.

Contact Information...

- The Mended Hearts, Inc. National Office 8150 N. Central Expressway, M2075 Dallas, TX 75206
- National office phone # 1-888-432-7899 (1-888-HEART99)
- support@mendedhearts.org



Consumer Education Materials⁶

Mended Hearts...

- Provides members with: (*Description can be found on website)
 - Subscription to **Heartbeat* magazine
 - Participation in *chapter/group meetings
 - Participation in *visiting programs
 - Access to *"private" members website
- Provides non-members with an electronic copy of "Managing Your Heart Health Patient Resource Guide" on their website.
 - Electronic and print resource for physicians and patients about the prevention, management, and treatment of heart disease.



Advocacy^{1,7}

- How can a PT screen for patients in need of support groups and agencies?
 - PTs can include question about home life to gauge involvement and convenience of family and friends who may provide support.
 - patients with low family involvement often have more need of support groups for both emotional and educational reasons.
 - Groups at higher risk for low social support include: men, patients living alone, patients who perceive they have high financial burdens, and increasing severity of heart failure.⁷
 - PTs can use self-assessment questionnaires to provide objective reasons to advocate for support groups.
 - New York Heart Association (NYHA) Classification (I-IV) level⁷
 - Short Form – 12 Health Survey Questionnaire⁷
- Advocating for services provided by the support groups?
 - Educate patient on the positive results experienced by heart failure patients participating in support groups
 - Meta Analysis: Post-discharge support for older patients with CHF significantly reduced readmission rates and may improve health outcomes such as survival and QOL without increasing costs^{1,7}



Waiting Room Material²



Information for the Agency to Enhance Optimal Aging

- Physical therapists can help enhance optimal aging by:
 - Assessing patients' levels of function and grouping them accordingly.
 - Differentiating and individualizing the agency's programs and activities to accommodate the leveled groups.
 - Assessing patients' periodically throughout the time they are active in a support group to track progress and adjust the program accordingly.



References

1. Comprehensive discharge planning and post-discharge support reduces hospital readmission in older people with congestive heart failure. *Evidence-based Healthcare and Public Health*. 2004;8(5):248-249. doi: 10.1016/j.ehbc.2004.08.032
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4. <https://www.cardiosmart.org/>
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6. <http://mendedhearts.org/>
7. Sullivan MJ, Wood L, Terry J, et al. The support, education, and research in chronic heart failure study (SEARCH): A mindfulness-based psychoeducational intervention improves depression and clinical symptoms in patients with chronic heart failure. *Am Heart J*. 2009;157(1):84-90. doi: 10.1016/j.ahj.2008.08.033.

