

Group-based stress management interventions for HIV infected persons

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This workshop will present a summary of the rationale and procedures for using cognitive behavioral stress management (CBSM) interventions with a variety of HIV-infected populations for the purpose of improving quality of life, modifying health behaviors, modulating immune system functioning and optimizing health. After presenting a psychoneuroimmunologic model for HIV infection, we will present experimental research demonstrating the effects of this intervention on quality of life and mood state, immune system functioning and health outcomes. We will also present intensive studies designed to identify the mechanisms underlying these effects.

The workshop will then outline the content and format of each of the 10 modules comprising a CBSM program Stress Management, Adherence and Relaxation Training (SMART) which has been tailored to meet the specific needs and address the critical challenges faced by different populations living with HIV. We will discuss ways in which these modules can be applied to a variety of HIV-related stressors (e.g., serostatus notification, dealing with symptoms, family-related issues, complex HIV medication regimens) experienced by the HIV-positive patient. Slides, overheads, handouts extracted from treatment manuals and experiential activities will be used to illustrate each of the modules. We also review methods for assessing treatment outcomes, participant adherence, and skill acquisition.

This seminar will use an interactive format and will be geared toward practitioners in health care arenas who wish to incorporate group-based stress management interventions into their list of support services for persons living with HIV and for other populations dealing with chronic stress or chronic disease issues.