

EPIC DIABETES CONFERENCE

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EMPOWERING PATIENTS
FOR
INDIVIDUALIZED CARE



ROLE OF THE FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS FOR PEOPLE WITH DIABETES: UNDERSTANDING THE IMPORTANCE OF EMOTIONAL AND PRACTICAL SUPPORT



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NO CONFLICTS OF INTEREST TO REPORT



ZERO



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OBJECTIVE OF PRESENTATION

- To explore how family, friends and support systems play a critical role in living life well with T1D.



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THE MANY CHALLENGES OF LIFE WITH T1D

■ Physical challenges:

- Constant monitoring of bg levels, insulin needs, exercise and carbs...oh my!
- Lots of pokes
- Filling prescriptions, changing sensors and sets
- Responding to device alarms and other prompts from parents, partners, school staff or friends

■ Emotional and psychological Impact:

- Grief and adjustment, T1D burnout, T1D distress, depression, anxiety, Fear of hypo, Fear of Hyper, Needle anxiety, eating disorders...
- Ongoing stress and coping with the daily routines and lifestyle changes of life with T1D

■ Social and practical challenges:

- T1D costs and access
- Family dynamics and communication
- Bullying or lack of education at school, by peers, bosses or co-workers
- Disclosure



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THE ROLE OF FAMILY

■ Emotional Support

- Providing Encouragement, empathy and motivation
- Holding your loved one accountable; consistent monitoring
 - Parental role throughout the teen years but also could be negotiated with a partner

■ Practical Support

- Assist with meal planning, grocery shopping and cooking
- Monitoring timing for bg checks, sensor changes or set/pod changes
- Engaging in healthy behaviors as a family/couple
- D-Time

■ Creating Supportive Home Environment

- Adapting the home for diabetes management
 - healthy, pre-packaged snacks that are easy to grab on the go
 - place to store and organize extra supplies and plan for inventory
 - Plan for verbal and/or physical rewards when things are going well



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THE ROLE OF FRIENDS

■ Social and Emotional Support:

- Encouraging participation in social interactions and activities as usual
- Being there to listen, laugh and share experiences

■ Helping with Lifestyle Adjustments:

- Offering companionship in physical activities
- Supporting healthy habits, educate others that might tease about things like drinking diet soda

■ Understanding the Needs of a Friend with Diabetes:

- Educate yourself, so you know what your friends needs and how you might help
 - Go to an appt, conference or camp



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FINDING SUPPORT SYSTEMS

■ Interdisciplinary Healthcare Team

- Endocrinologist, NP's, Educators, Dietitians, Social workers, Psychologists
 - Provide medical expertise, counseling, guidance, treatment plans and resources

■ Extended Family and Friends

- Grandparents, aunts and uncles, neighbors, school friends, sports community

■ Support Groups/Camp Communities

- <https://childrensdiabetesfoundation.org/support-groups/>
- ADA Camps 6/22-27 **FULL**, Camp Sweeney TX 6/1-19 (3 sessions), T1D Strong Day Camps 6/10-13, Muma Movement 6/20, DTC 7/19-21, Round Up River Ranch Family Camp 5/30-6/1 **FULL**, Connected in Motion (adult adventures)

■ Online/Other Communities

- Access forums, apps, and digital tools that you find helpful
 - Breakthrough T1D <https://forum.breakthrought1d.org/>
- Connecting with others for advice, tips and support
 - Facebook; Colorado Family Link



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THE IMPACT OF SUPPORT ON DIABETES OUTCOMES

- **Improved Emotional Well-being**
 - Reduction in feelings of isolation, depression and anxiety
- **Better Diabetes Management and Control**
 - Higher levels of adherence to treatment plans and goals
 - Increased TIR, lower A1Cs
- **Healthier Lifestyles Overall**
 - It's far easier to adopt healthy habits with those around you are willing to do the same



HOW TO BUILD A STRONG SUPPORT SYSTEM

■ Open Communication

- Encouraging honest conversations about needs and challenges “D-Time”

■ Setting Boundaries

- Respecting the needs of the person with diabetes (ie: routines, preferences)

■ Active Involvement and Encouragement

- Family and friends should actively engage in the diabetes management process in a way that honors boundaries.



OVERCOMING CHALLENGES



■ Common Challenges

- Lack of Understanding or knowledge about diabetes
- Feelings of frustration, burnout and stress in caregivers/friends or person with T1D

■ Strategies to Overcome Challenges

- Education and Awareness
- Empathy and Patience
- Self care
- Asking for Professional Help

CONCLUSION

- Family, friends and larger support systems are essential to managing diabetes and living life well with diabetes!
- Emotional and practical support leads to better health outcomes!
- Talk with those you care about living with T1D about ways you can better support them.

QUESTIONS

