



This Month: Coping with Lupus Flares and Remissions

Roxanna Alvarez is a familiar face at the DLF support group meetings. She is the social worker from Arnold Palmer Hospital who serves as their liaison for our monthly meetings. This month, however, Roxanna was our guest speaker as well.



Alvarez led a group discussion about the phases of a diagnosis encouraging group members to share their story.

Just as Lupus can appear different from person to person, everyone reacts differently to the news that they have been diagnosed with Lupus.

According to [Naomi Golan](#), there are 4 phases to a diagnosis.

Onset Phase

Reality sets in, coping is most challenging. This is the time when you begin to gather information, form your support systems and seek resources to help you understand your new diagnosis. You are dealing with your family's initial response as well as your own. Often this is a time of learning how to cope by changing your life to accommodate your care and symptoms. Some suggestions offered by group members include: going to theme parks in the evening and taking up new hobbies. This phase is characterized by anger, denial and a quest for information.

Acute Phase

This is the period when you begin to learn the plan of treatment and find your doctors. As you begin to learn more about the disease, you develop a new routine to include all the appointments to the different doctors involved in your treatment. One word of caution from the group members; be careful that you do not get overwhelmed with all the information available on the internet. It can be helpful in learning about your disease, but it can also cause more anxiety.

Recuperation Phase

This phase involves dealing with the flares and the symptoms as they appear in your life and the emotions that go with them. It could involve hospitalization. One important point brought up is that it is very important to be active in your treatment. Some group members found that the specialists can sometimes overlook other symptoms or conditions outside of their specialty. Remember: you have every right as a patient to question your care.

Restoration Phase

The final phase and possibly the most challenging after the onset, this is the time when your illness becomes part of your life. You find new ways to do things and you adjust the old habits to conform to your new needs. Some common difficulties include learning to ask for help, to slow down, and expressing negative feelings.

Since Lupus symptoms are affected by stress it is very important to find ways to reduce stress. Roxanna suggests finding ways to be positive that work for you. Talk over your negative feelings. Allow yourself to feel the anger, pain and fear rather than keeping them inside where they can cause anxiety and encourage flare ups. Emotional well being is related to physical health and therefore it is important to take care of all aspects without neglecting one.

How To Stay Positive

Here are some suggestions from group members:

- ~Talk to others
- ~Sleep
- ~Baths with Epsom Salts
- ~Reading motivational books
- ~Know yourself and your body!

contributed by members:

- <http://www.itzarion.com/>
- <http://joycemeyer.org/>
- <http://thesecret.tv>

Upcoming Meetings

March 27, 2007

April 24, 2007

May 22, 2007

June 26, 2007

July 24, 2007

August 24, 2007

September 25, 2007

Meetings are held the fourth

Tuesday of every month at

Arnold Palmer Hospital

Classrooms 1 & 2

92 W. Miller St.
Orlando, FL 32806



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