

# YOU ARE NOT ALONE

## Diabetes Support Group

Members of the Diabetes Support Group break the silence to tell Praveen Kaur, diabetes nurse educator of Diabetic Society of Singapore, how they have benefited from being a part of the 'family'.

Living with a chronic illness like diabetes can be overwhelming. At times, you may feel that no one understands the stress that you are experiencing. If prolonged and unchecked, these feelings of anxiety, stress, and isolation can become obstacles in your quest for wellness.

But you don't have to be alone, urge members of the Diabetes Support Group who have received comfort and encouragement from others in the same boat.

"The other members share our pain and encourage us to cope better with diabetes and they give us suggestions and practical tips which we may not be aware of," says Mdm How, a pre-diabetic.

Mdm Sin, who has had diabetes for more than a decade, finds the support group helpful and knowledgeable as well as geared towards the unique and individual needs of the members. She says, "As a member, you will learn the latest methods of diabetes self-management and treatment through discussions, seminars and workshops."

Mdm Yik agrees. "The support group has given me the opportunity to learn more about diabetes, especially from

those who have had it for a long time," she shares. In fact, she adds, "those who have joined the support group have discovered that the biggest experts on a disease are often those who live with it daily."

One compelling reason to join a support group is the assurance that "someone else knows what I am going through" and this helps to alleviate

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their pain and struggle with diabetes, says Ms Rathi Jayabalan, diabetes nurse educator, Diabetic Society of Singapore. "It is especially so for people who have just discovered they are suffering from the condition and may feel a little lost in the beginning," she observes.

For this reason, Mr S Mahaindran, a newly-diagnosed diabetes patient with a heart problem, believes that it is important for a person with diabetes to be given the opportunity to share his or her views with others. Which

is why he enjoys the support group sessions held on the first Friday of every month. "I get to air my views on the educational topics discussed," he says enthusiastically.

Dorothy, who is diagnosed with type 1 diabetes, is equally grateful for the opportunities to open up to others in similar situations and where the environment is friendly and welcoming. She says, "The support group provides a congenial atmosphere so it is easy to share and talk about your condition."

Apart from being able to share stories and tips with other members, Dorothy also enjoys the support and guidance from a dedicated and caring team of diabetes nurse educators. "They help teach us self-care survival skills to manage diabetes, so that we can be in control of our own lives and not be controlled by the disease," remarks Dorothy, with a smile.

