



Session Zero Script for Better Choices, Better Health Chronic Disease

1. Say: Welcome!

My name is _____ from Better Choices, Better Health[®] South Dakota and I am excited to talk to you today about our program (if a workshop is scheduled, provide upcoming location, dates and time).

- We'd like to start by getting to know all of you
 - We are going to invite you to introduce yourselves
 - Briefly tell us one hobby you enjoy or interesting fact about yourself
- (Leaders model first)

2. Say: What is an ongoing health condition?

- By a show of hands, who here either **has an ongoing health condition** or **knows someone with an ongoing health condition?** (leaders raise hands) This would include conditions like: arthritis, asthma, diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease and many more. What about chronic pain or anxiety? Having difficulty with sleeping, managing your weight, or feeling depressed?

These can all be considered an ongoing health condition and if you are dealing with any of these on a regular basis- you are going to get SO much out of this workshop.

3. Say: What is the Better Choices, Better Health Chronic Disease program?

- Better Choices, Better Health[®] is a 6-week workshop for adults with **any** ongoing health condition. Caregivers are also welcome to participate.
- Participants learn skills and techniques on how to lessen pain and fatigue, deal with difficult emotions, and improve their quality of life while dealing with these ongoing health conditions.
- This workshop is not about specific diseases; many people have more than one disease or condition, so they learn how different techniques can be used to manage multiple ongoing health conditions.
- Better Choices, Better Health[®] is a statewide program, offering not only workshops but also trainings for lay leaders to facilitate workshops.

4. Say: Here is the Workshop Format

- A small group, usually 10 to 15 people, meets at the same time and location each week.
- The six-week workshop meets for 2-½ hours each time and includes a break.
- The group discussions and activities are highly interactive; we try new skills together, share experiences, and support.
- It's not a sit and listen class
- Each week you get to set your own small goals called action plans—you pick something you want to do.



(Optional) Show: PARTS OF AN ACTION PLAN (CHART 5)

(Optional) Distribute copy of action plan from *Living a Healthy Life with Chronic Conditions* book

5. Say: Here is an example of an Interactive Activity - Brainstorming

- We're going to do a "brainstorm" next. The purpose of brainstorming is to allow us to share as many ideas about a topic as possible in the quickest way possible. To do this, we'll be following these guidelines:

(Optional) Show: BRAINSTORMING (CHART 4)

- **Anyone can share**
 - **No commenting during brainstorm** (about others' ideas, negative or positive)
 - **No questions until after** (the brainstorm)
 - **Clarification waits until after** (when all the ideas are out, we'll go over anything that needs clarification)
- **Say:** The question we're going to brainstorm now is:

What are the different kinds of ongoing physical and mental health conditions?

Instructions to Leaders: Follow brainstorming fundamentals as you would in a workshop. After the brainstorm, read back the list, and ask for clarification.

- **Say:** As you can see, this workshop can benefit just about anybody.

6. Say: During the course of the workshop, participants will learn:

- How to solve problems when "life happens".
- How to deal with difficult emotions.
- How to breathe better.
- How to relax.
- How to deal with pain and fatigue.
- How to make small changes for healthier eating.
- How to communicate effectively with others.
- How to use medications correctly.
- How to manage depression.
- How to work with their health care professionals.

7. Show BCBH DVD – optional (2 or 5 minute versions)

8. Program History and Success

Say: Better Choices, Better Health[®] is an evidence-based program. That means that a study was done with about 1,000 people who had ongoing health conditions. These people were followed for three years. The study looked at:

- Changes in pain, fatigue, shortness of breath, and depression.



- Visits to physicians and to emergency rooms, and hospital visits.
- Level of confidence in managing health conditions.
- Use of self-management behaviors in taking medications, doing exercise, eating healthy foods, using community resources, and communicating with doctors.
- Managing stress.

The results of the study showed that people who took this workshop did better in all of the areas than those who didn't attend the workshop. The program was created by Stanford University more than 20 years ago, is still there today, and is offered in all 50 states and 27 countries.

9. Say: Here are examples of things taught in the workshop:

Show: SYMPTOM CYCLE (CHART 7)

Many of us think that the symptoms we experience are from just one cause: our disease or condition right?

(Point to chart) While the disease can definitely cause pain, shortness of breath, fatigue it is not the ONLY cause. Each of these symptoms can by themselves contribute to the other symptoms and make each worse! Even worse –these symptoms can feed on each other. For example:

- Depression causes fatigue
- Stress causes tense muscles
- And these can lead to more pain or shortness of breath and so on...

The interactions of these types of symptoms make our disease or condition worse. It becomes a vicious cycle that continues to get worse until we find a way to BREAK THE CYCLE.

Through the Better Choices, Better Health[®] workshop, participants come to understand their symptom cycle and how each symptom contributes to their personal condition.

Say: What we want is to BREAK THE CYCLE –and we need tools and techniques to be successful.

HOW do we do this?

Show: SELF MANAGEMENT TOOL BOX (CHART 2):

Here are some techniques you will be learning in this Better Choices, Better Health[®] workshop:

We call this our Self-Management Tool Box

Obviously, we use different tools for different jobs –a hammer, a screw driver, etc.

When we're talking about our ongoing condition –we are going to use self-management tools...



Let's pick a tool and see how we can use it today: **Using your Mind**

When we consider our tools for managing a health problem –our mind is one of the most powerful. Let's do a simple activity to see how our *mind affects our body*.

CLOSE your eyes... get comfortable and take a deep breath. "Imagine you're holding a big bright yellow lemon. Picture it in your mind. You see it? ... You can feel the texture of the lemon rind in your hand. Now lift the lemon to your nose. You can smell its strong, citrus aroma... .pause... .Now bring the lemon to your mouth and take a big bite out of it... its juicy, and it squirts all through your mouth. You can taste the tart lemon juice filling your mouth...the juice dribbles down your chin...suck the juice from that lemon!" ... OPEN your eyes...

What happened to your body while you were imagining the lemon juice in your mouth? Did your mouth salivate? Did your mouth pucker? Did some of you shudder from the sourness? But there was not a lemon in sight!! SO, you just changed the way your body felt with your mind! This is just a simple example of how the mind can affect the body with very little effort. Imagine what we could do if we learned ways to use that power to help us with our symptoms!

This is just one tool - Using our Minds - but with this workshop, you will learn this and all the other self-management tools (mention others if time permits, pointing to each tool in the Self-Management Tool Box – Chart 2):

- **Physical Activity** –we spend a lot of time discussing being physically active and how it can help with all our symptoms.
- **Medications** –discuss how to take your medications and common side effects, and ways to remember to take them.
- **Decision-Making** –how do you make future plans for yourself? This topic we will discuss by working through some decisions and how to do that process.
- **Action Planning** –every week you will be doing an action plan. This is something just for you. Something you want to do and something achievable during the week.
- **Breathing Techniques** –learn breathing techniques that will help you relax and deal with tense muscles, pain and fatigue.
- **Understanding Emotions** –we will discuss how your emotions affect your condition and also talk about depression.
- **Problem-Solving** –throughout the whole workshop-we focus on problem solving techniques.
- **Using your Mind** –we covered that.
- **Sleep** –we talk about ways to get a better sleep, how to fall asleep and how to fall back to sleep.
- **Communication** –how to ask for what you want by using “I” messages not “You” messages.
- **Healthy Eating** –we don't talk about diets but how to make the right choices.
- **Weight Management** –we talk about how maintaining a healthy weight can help decrease some of your physical symptoms you may be experiencing.
- **Working with Health Professionals** –always an interesting topic –we will talk about better ways to communicate with your healthcare system and your providers (physicians, nurses, etc.).



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10. Say: In Closing...

This is a course that is focused on your personal choice - you work on what you **want** to work on. It's an exciting course that is very interactive.

This has been just a brief look at what is offered in the Better Choices, Better Health Chronic Disease workshop.

Participants also receive a *Living a Healthy Life with Chronic Conditions* Workbook and a Relaxation CD, and a certificate of completion if meeting attendance requirements.

I'm going to send around rack cards, flyers, and a sign-up sheet if you're interested in attending, but before I do that,

11. Say: Does anyone have any QUESTIONS?