

# **Discussion Guide**

## ***Living with Sugar Diabetes***



This guide has been created to accompany the *photobook* entitled *Living with Sugar Diabetes* which has been developed by Dr. Sharon A. Denham. The guide provides suggestions and ideas for ways to use this photo-book with persons with diabetes and their family members.

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### **About the *Fotonovella***

This *fotonovella* and its accompanying discussion guide are part of the *Diabetes: A Family Matter* program and toolkit is copyrighted, but can be freely used for education in local communities. They may not be used for commercial purposes. Be sure to mention the *Diabetes: A Family Matter* program and tell others about the program website <[www.diabetesfamily.net](http://www.diabetesfamily.net)> whenever you use them. You can make copies of these materials to share with persons with diabetes, their family members and friends, and local volunteers.

A *fotonovella* is a Spanish word that means photo story. A *fotonovella* presents information about a disease or illness in an engaging way that is interesting to the reader. It is also a good way to address problems of low literacy or low health literacy. By using small amounts of text and pictures, a story that presents ideas in a realistic way and is easy to understand can be told. This *fotonovella* addresses diabetes care needs from a negative family-support perspective.

*Living with Sugar Diabetes* is about a woman who is diagnosed with diabetes, but her family does not give her the support she needs to cope with her new diagnosis of diabetes.

Files in a pdf format are available for printing copies of the *fotonovella* and can be found on the *Diabetes: A Family Matter* website <[www.diabetesfamily.net](http://www.diabetesfamily.net)>. Files can be found for the booklet format and another layout that would allow you to

print this *fotonovella* as a flyer that might be used as a newspaper insert or a less expensive mode of distribution. You may want to copy these files and take them to a local printer.

### **Developing the *Fotonovella***

The idea to create a *fotonovella* for use in the Appalachian region came from the successful use of this media form with Hispanic and Latino populations. No known examples or use of this form of educational media to address families and diabetes were found for those living in the Appalachian region. Creation of this teaching tool was a multi-step project that first involved the scripting of two stories, one that suggested a negative or non-supportive family environment and a second story that demonstrated family activities viewed as more supportive of diabetes self-management.

Once the original story lines were established, the story was then laid out into a story board format with each frame using stick figures to represent the photos that would be included. This process went through several iterations as social patterns, family concerns, and best practices for diabetes management were considered in the development of a culturally sensitive story. An aim for the final product was to convey ideas and messages in a clear and simple manner. Thus, the story text was reviewed repeatedly until the original concepts were moved from the more complex original ideas to plain language, a far greater effort than anticipated.

Lining up the models for the photo-shoot and the deciding places where the photography would occur were the next steps. Making arrangements for the time and date for the photography and permissions to take photos in various places needed to occur. Concerns about being able to take pictures of a family in their home and use of rural spaces were addressed. A next step was to develop a shot book that identified the specific photos to be taken and the order in which this needed to occur. Given that the story line actually takes place over several days, this meant that clothing changes for the models had to be factored into the plans along with the location changes for the various photos taken.

Once the photos were ready for review, then selection of the exact photographs for each story frames had to be selected. Larry Hamel-Lambert, M.A., the photographer for this project, then prepared the selected photos for the production of the *fotonovella*. A local printer was contracted for the design work of the placement of the bubble text into the pictures and completion of the product. One problem recognized at this point was that the fact that all photos had been taken in a landscape rather than a portrait mode limited the formatting style. We neglected to identify the ways photos would be formatted on the pages of the final booklet. Future attempts in developing a similar product should consider inserting this additional step after the story board with text and photo ideas are completed. Formats for page layouts could then be used for to factor in landscape and portraiture format into the shot book and photography sessions.

Costs for paper and printing should be considered in the look for a final product. Given that this is a prototype product, heavier paper were used for the final printing. Discussion with a local printer can assist you to consider a variety of negative and positive things to consider in printing the final product. Plans for distribution of the final product should be considered as format for printing is decided. Cost can be an important factor. Thus, the newspaper formatted insert may prove to be a less expensive way to print large quantities for broad distribution.



### **Ideas for Using the *Fotonovella***

An important aim of the *Diabetes: A Family Matter* program and toolkit materials is to make healthy lifestyles and diabetes prevention more visible in your community. The *fotonovella* can be used with diabetes education classes, support groups, and other education. Copies of *fotonovellas* can be placed in a variety of public places where they might be readily accessed. For example, making these available in physician offices, hospital waiting rooms, health departments or federally qualified health centers may be useful in reaching target audiences. However, places such as beauty parlors, barber shops, laundromats, car washes, automotive repair shops, or

other places where people have to wait for services can also be good places to have them available. Sharing them at health fairs or other community events where health is being promoted can also be useful. Be creative and find ways to use these materials with your local diabetes coalition in your community.



### Preparing for Discussion

If you plan to use both the positive and the negative *fotonovellas* in discussion, it is good to begin with the negative story and then turn to the positive one. Reading of the negative story may cause people to react differently to some of the ideas conveyed. A key idea for use of this *fotonovella* with a small group is to encourage discussion about ways these less helpful communication forms and behaviors can be changed into more supportive ones. The group can be persons with diabetes, family members or friends of persons with diabetes, or a group that is a combination of all. Use this discussion guide after the *fotonovella* is read with an individual or a small group of people to consider current family routines.

Be sure that you have enough copies of the *fotonovella* so that everyone can read their own copy. Keep in mind that some people

may have literacy problems and may need assistance. Offer to read the story out loud and let everyone follow along as they look at their copy of the story. After the story has been completed you are ready to begin the discussion.

### Things to Keep in Mind

As you think about the best ways to address diabetes self-management needs, it is important to recognize that family can be a great source of support. A major goal is to empower the person with diabetes and their family members. Empowerment refers to increasing the abilities and capacities of individuals, families, and groups in ways that help them make choices that result in actions that produce desired outcomes. Empowerment occurs through relationships when power is transferred from one person to another. Empowerment equips people with the skills, knowledge, and tools they need to succeed and makes change happen. Not just any change, but changes that are in the direction of the goals they want to achieve.

Thus, the aim of this *fotonovella* is to provide a way to discuss what happens whenever a family or friends do not provide the kinds of support needed for good diabetes self-management. Family can provide support that is helpful and is empowering to persons living with diabetes. However, they can also sabotage good self-management behaviors by putting roadblocks and temptations in the way. Discussing these possibilities can assist groups to consider what is occurring within their families when they are living with diabetes.

**Persons with Diabetes Need:**

- Knowledge to make good decisions.
- Family and friends to provide the right kinds of support.
- Goals shared with family members.
- Control of the things they need to do.
- Resources to support their intentions.
- Times when actions can be evaluated for their effectiveness.

*Family health routines* are dynamic behavioral patterns linked to diabetes self-management. Most people rather consistently adhere to behaviors that can be recalled, described, and discussed from individual, family, and various perspectives. Routines have unique qualities and often involve family members and friends even when they are not aware. Routines are not static, but change over time. Some changes are slow and the changes are not noticed. Most people strive to maintain the integrity of behaviors they view as meaningful. Family members are often aware of one another's routine actions even when they are often discussed. These individual and family routines provide ways for those living with diabetes to discuss current actions and plan ways to make needed changes. Much more about family routines can be obtained from the **Family** section of the *Diabetes: A Family Matter* website <[www.diabetesfamily.net](http://www.diabetesfamily.net)>.

Whenever a person is diagnosed with diabetes is told that they are at risk for the disease, their doctor also says that many actions need to be altered. The needed changes for optimal diabetes self-management usually involve many complex behaviors that include multiple family members. These routines can be supported

by family members and friends or they can be disrupted by them. While some persons can easily make the changes needed with a family willing and able to cooperate, other families might be more challenged by the needed changes. This support is greatly affected by the ways family members and friends usually function in daily life. Assisting them to recognize the needs for changes and identification of specific ways behaviors can be altered may be especially beneficial in attaining the desired outcomes and avoiding other serious health risks.

**Discussion of *Living with Sugar Diabetes***

Immediately after completing the reading of the *fotonovella*, a good way to begin discussion is by asking questions such as:

- What do you think are the most important points in this story?
- How do you think the woman in the story was feeling as she sat in the doctor's office waiting?
- What do you think she might have been thinking on her way home?



The idea is to get people thinking about this woman's experience, but also to arouse some ideas from the participants' personal life experiences. Encourage people to share a bit about when they were first told they had diabetes. Ask questions such as:

- What happened when you were told you had diabetes?
- What were you thinking?
- How did you feel at that time?

Allow group members to share some personal experiences. Identify what their major concerns were at the time of diagnosis. Then ask:

- Were you alone when you were told that you had diabetes or was another family member present?
- If there was another family member present, can you recall what you talked about on the way home?
- What were you thinking and feeling at that time?



Next encourage people to talk about what happened when the woman arrived home and told her husband what the doctor had told her. Ask questions such as:

- What did you think about the way her husband responded?
- How do you think that his wife might have felt when he seemed indifferent?
- What things in the story seemed especially important to you?

- If you were there, what would you want to say to her husband? What about her daughter?

After you have allowed some time to discuss the family responses from the story, then turn the discussion to talking about the personal experiences of the group members. Begin discussion with things such as:

- In what ways was the experience in this family similar to your family?
- In what ways was the experience different from your family?
- What did friends say when they learned you had diabetes? What did they do?

Next, lead the discussion to some general ideas about diabetes self-management. Ask some questions like:

- What has your family experience in living with diabetes been like?
- Did your family know what was involved in living with diabetes?
- What did they do that was helpful?
- In what ways might they have been more helpful?

The end of your discussion about this story may continue by reading the positive *fotonovella* entitled *Family Support for Those with Sugar Diabetes* and then using the additional questions with that story. However, if you are going to end this discussion without reading the positive story, then you might want to conclude with some discussion around questions such as:

- What happens when family or friends do not give you the support you need?

- How does that make you feel?
- What do you do when you feel your family does not support you?
- Are there things that you might do differently?

A discussion about the ways living with diabetes alters family routines can assist group members to think about better ways to better communicate their needs to family members and friends. Assisting people in your community to understand that often people do not know how to give the best support can be a valuable way to begin a dialogue that can be continued. Encourage folks to go home and continue this conversation with others. Empowering persons with diabetes to ask for the help they need to manage their disease is an important step. Family members and friends care and can assist those with diabetes to live healthy with diabetes.

Some families have difficulty in clearly expressing their needs to one another. Other families may have routines that are difficult to alter. The discussion leader can respond to the needs and priorities expressed. It is not important to have all of the answers, but it is good to provide the chance for people to talk about what it is like when the support needed is not available. End the discussion by doing some goal setting and helping one another identify strategies for overcoming the perceived obstacles.



If you use the fotonovellas or discussion guides in your community, please take time to log on to the **Communicate** section of the *Diabetes: A Family Matter* website <[www.diabetesfamily.net](http://www.diabetesfamily.net)> and share with others how you used these materials and what outcomes were achieved.