
504 **Creative Aftercare Program Amidst
Coronavirus Pandemic**

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Introduction: Coronavirus disease presented itself early in 2019 inducing a considerable degree of fear, worry, and unknown throughout the United States. National and State governed laws imposed social distancing measures, quarantining citizens, and isolating infected persons. Apart from its physical impact, COVID-19 pandemic has brought numerous changes to people's lives affecting people both physically and psychologically. A key component of quality of life of burn survivors consist of maintaining a long-term burn center connection through support groups. Our burn center developed a virtual format for aftercare to provide psychological support during the pandemic.

Methods: Regular attendees and new burn survivors were contacted by the aftercare specialist from an American Burn Association verified burn center. Participants were surveyed on the best mode of contact and current addresses were obtained. "Happy Mail" was mailed to support group participants 3 times/month. Items included in these packages ranged from motivational sayings, gift cards, essential oils, candies, art projects, and reminders to log onto the virtual support groups. The gift packages also included a mental health check-in icebreaker. These gift packages took the place of our in-person support groups and contained all materials needed to engage and guide participation in the virtual monthly support group. Participants were then invited to join a social media support group for our local burn center.

Results: Burn survivors continued to receive quality psychosocial support to cope with and process feelings as well as validate emotions. Attendees regularly expressed gratitude in receiving "Happy Mail" as it brought a feeling of connectiveness to a group of burn survivors who rely on each other for peer support. The gift packages also served as a reminder of the upcoming virtual aftercare support groups as our attendance did not see a decline at monthly meetings.

Conclusions: Our experience suggests that a method of offering "Happy Mail" as part of a curriculum to augment virtual aftercare can be a model to adapt to the emotional support burn survivors and their family members need during the pandemic.

505 **Support Group Lives on Virtually Despite
Pandemic**

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Introduction: Support group for burn survivors is immensely beneficial for reintegration and normalization of the burn recovery. The corona virus pandemic, however, limited in-person interactions significantly and decreased the travel capabilities. Our regional burn center serves an 8-state region, and as such, our every other month in-person support group consisted of survivors and family members from a large geographic area.

Methods: Support group volunteers and staff members recognized the need for continued support of survivors during the pandemic. Limitations of large, in-person meetings were implemented by our host organization to comply with pandemic safety guidelines. Evaluation of resources available led to development of a virtually supported meeting space. Email addresses were gathered to schedule. This allowed for interaction of survivors from an unlimited geographic area.

Results: Support group survivor volunteers and staff met to develop parameters, topics, IT support and logistics. Every other month support group was converted to a monthly gathering virtually due to easier access by survivors. Attendees completed a survey to evaluate and make recommendations for opportunities for improvement. The same number of survivors were present for in person and virtual meetings.

Conclusions: During this pandemic, limitations were placed that further isolate survivors. A virtually based support group has allowed for more frequent interactions between volunteers and new survivors. Various topics were discussed including survivor preparedness for public reintegration, worker's compensation and care giver burnout. Speakers from multiple disciplines have been able to address issues requested by survivors. In this format, we have been able to continue the support of our survivors as they continue to recover. Social distancing has isolated many people during the pandemic; virtual support group has been paramount in continuing to connect our survivor family.