

Chronic health conditions

REFLECT

Chronic health conditions (CHC) are conditions that last one year or more and require ongoing medical attention or limit activities of daily life or both.

Many are invisible conditions. Some chronic health conditions are prevalent and well known, while others are quite rare. A few examples include chronic pain, cystic fibrosis, diabetes, digestive disorders, fibromyalgia, migraines, heart disease, Lupus, Lyme disease, long Covid, rheumatoid arthritis, and multiple sclerosis.

People with chronic health conditions may experience isolation and hopelessness.

RENEW

- Your efforts to understand and support those with Chronic Health Conditions.
- Your commitment to inclusion of and compassion for those with CHC.
- Your endeavors to ensure people with CHC feel safe and empowered to share their challenges, needs, and strengths.

Lifestyle measures and chronic health conditions

REFLECT

Attention to and encouragement for certain lifestyle practices can significantly improve the day-to-day reality of those living with chronic health conditions (CHC). By implementing good routines around food, movement, relaxation, and community connection, many with chronic health conditions experience improved quality of life and a reduction in disease burden.

RENEW

- Your commitment to inquiring about and supporting dietary needs of those with CHC. Offer to shop, prepare special foods, share recipes, or cook with them.
- Your willingness to engage with others in exercise and movement at their pace. Plan a walk, take a dance class, or work out together.
- Your offers of social connection. Often, those with CHC worry about committing to social engagements. Let them know it's okay to cancel last minute.

Mental health and chronic health conditions

REFLECT

There is a strong link between physical and mental health. Many people with chronic physical conditions also experience challenges with depression, anxiety, and other mental illness. Day-to-day physical symptoms, loss of a “normal” routine, financial burdens, and lack of understanding by the public (or even health providers) can produce a mix of emotions, including stress, isolation, and hopelessness. Likewise, those with serious mental illness may experience a wide range of chronic physical conditions.

RENEW

- Your commitment to supporting those who may be dealing with dark and difficult periods.
- Your preparedness to be present and empathetic without judgment.
- Your willingness to share personal experiences with mental health challenges to help reduce the stigma of mental illness.

Spoon theory and chronic health conditions

REFLECT

Many people with chronic health conditions (CHC) ration their energy throughout the day. Christine Miserandino used a bouquet of spoons as a metaphor to help her friend understand the limited energy she has because of her Lupus.

Spoons became the tangible representation of the amount of energy she had available. Different activities (e.g., showering, work, meal prep) required different numbers of spoons. Before the end of the day, she often “ran out of spoons.”

Spoon Theory is now utilized by many with CHC to share their energy limitations with others (e.g., “I only have one spoon left.” “I need to save my spoons for tonight’s dinner.”)

RENEW

- Your compassion for those who cancel plans because they have no more physical and/or mental energy left that day.
- Relationships that have been challenged by limited spoons.

Dos and Don'ts of supporting people with chronic health conditions

REFLECT

Truly helping and supporting someone with a chronic health condition (CHC) requires being a good listener with *savlnut* (patience), *kavod* (respect) and *hesed* (kindness).

RENEW

DO

- Take the time to be understanding of their challenges and symptoms.
- Keep your communication open, validate what they are going through, and listen, listen, listen!
- Let them know you are there for them and offer to do specific tasks that they want or need.

DON'T

- Constantly talk about their CHC.
- Make assumptions based on how they look (e.g., “You don’t look sick.”) or offer unsolicited advice for managing their condition.
- Become frustrated when plans change or adaptations must be made.

Jewish Holidays 5783

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| Sept 25, 2022 | Erev Rosh Hashanah |
| Sept 26-27, 2022 | Rosh Hashanah |
| Oct 4, 2022 | Kol Nidre |
| Oct 5, 2022 | Yom Kippur |
| Oct 10-16, 2022 | Sukkot |
| Oct 17-18, 2022 | Shmini Atzeret/ Simchat Torah |
| Dec 19-26, 2022 | Chanukah |
| Feb 6, 2023 | Tu B'shvat |
| Mar 6-7, 2023 | Purim |
| Apr 5, 2023 | Erev Pesach |
| Apr 6-13, 2023 | Pesach |
| Apr 18, 2023 | Yom HaShoah |
| Apr 26, 2023 | Yom HaAtzmaut |
| May 25-28, 2023 | Shavuot |

