



HEALTHY LINKS IOWA

Put Life Back into Your Life

Volunteer as a Better Choices/Better Health Leader

If you're interested in helping older adults improve their quality of life, volunteering as a Better Choices/Better Health Leader is an effective and rewarding way to make a difference. What follows is a program overview designed to help you garner a better understanding of what your role will be. Contact the Polk County Health Department to learn more.

The Better Choices/Better Health course is an evidence-based program developed by researchers at Stanford University Patient Education Research Center. Facilitated by trained leaders, one of whom also has a chronic health condition, the program is designed as a six-week workshop series that meets once a week for two-and-a-half hours.

Program goals:

- Bring people with chronic health conditions and their families together in a community setting
- Support and enhance disease-specific education (without replacing it)
- Introduce chronic health condition tools necessary for daily life
- Help participants gain self-confidence in their ability to control symptoms
- Control how their health problems affect their lives

Program characteristics:

- Highly interactive
- Introduces a variety of skills
- Focuses on goal setting
- Practices using management skills
- Shares experiences
- Emphasizes mutual support

Topics covered:

Goal setting	Communications skills
Problem setting	Developing patient-physician partnerships
Fitness/exercise	Use of community resources
Better breathing	Managing medications
Managing emotions	Nutrition
Advanced directives	Cognitive symptom management (relaxation, distraction, self-talk, visualization)

Leader requirements:

- Attend four-day training sessions-preferably with a team partner
- Conduct two six-week courses within one year
- Complete class participant evaluations
- Comfortable presenting the program strictly as written in the *Leader's Manual*
- *Where possible, we prefer that Trainees have completed the Better Choices/Better Health Workshop as a participant before training as a leader.*

Contact the [Polk County Health Department at \(515\) 323-5234](tel:5153235234) to learn more about how to become a Better Choices/Better Health Leader.

