Relationships and IBS

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Communicating About IBS in Relationships

Any type of relationship, whether it is family, friend or romantic, can affect an illness and how a person is able to cope with that illness. The same can be said about irritable bowel syndrome. Doing things like not making the illness the primary focus of your relationship or being concerned about the person with IBS can help them to feel more at ease with their illness. Let's take a look at how you can develop relationships with IBS.

As a Partner

As a partner of someone who suffers from IBS, you want to make sure you are able to do everything you can to make it easier for them to cope with their illness. The first thing you have to do is to understand that they are the resident authority of their condition. You do not want to be over-protective by constantly asking if they are all right. It actually can cause anxiety for someone with IBS, which can make pain and discomfort worse. Likewise, you want to avoid placing blame on someone with IBS, telling them that it is happening because they do not eat right or because they are too stressed. It makes the person feel as though they have little to no control over their own situation, which can make them feel helpless.

Moreover, you want to help your loved one with irritable bowel syndrome by creating techniques for time management. You want to try to avoid over-scheduling them or living in a disorganized and chaotic sort of environment, because it can cause a worsening of IBS symptoms. Having organization and a manageable schedule allows your partner to feel more in control and balanced. At the same time, you need to be flexible and understanding when flare-ups occur. Because of the unpredictable nature of IBS, you will need to understand that plans will sometimes have to change due to the flare up of IBS.

As a Partner with IBS

Because you have IBS, you may not fully understand where a person without this condition is coming from, and you will need to try to see things from their perspective. This means you need to be very specific in what you need from them. They are not always going to understand what you are going through, so the only way to get them to understand is to explain to them how they can help. In addition, there are things that you can do to help manage your own symptoms of IBS.

These include:

- You can find parts of your relationships that lead to stress and try to decrease that by talking about whatever it is that causes tension in your relationships.
- Understand what makes your body feel better/worse in any given situation, so that you can learn what works best for you.
- You need to understand that your partner may be projecting their concerns and emotions onto you. You may need to explain this situation to them, so that they understand that it is not helpful to your health issue

to project onto you.

Conclusion

People who suffer from irritable bowel syndrome have to manage their symptoms on an individual basis. Also, a person in a relationship with someone who suffers with IBS must learn to be understanding of the other person's situation. Open communication and avoiding blame are the best ways to maintaining a relationship in spite of IBS.