

THE PERCEIVED ROLE OF PERSONAL SOCIAL IDENTITY IN THE PROMOTION OF ARTHRITIS SELF-MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

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ABSTRACT

This research attempts to understand how a person with arthritis perceives his or her own social role identity and how that might relate to the underutilization of arthritis self-management programs. The ultimate goal of this research is to learn how people with arthritis perceive themselves and their disease within a particular social role and how those perceptions shape health-related beliefs and behaviors.

Qualitative research methods provide a framework for this study, including in-depth interviews and ethnographic fieldwork. Data was collected and analyzed for themes and patterns, including social role identity and utilization of self-management strategies.

Arthritis self-management programs are designed for many purposes, including reducing pain and increasing mobility. However, many people with arthritis already practice arthritis self-management strategies although not aware of the implications. The promotion of such programs should communicate to people with arthritis the ability to fulfill social roles longer and with less effort by practicing formal self-management strategies.