

Power of peer support: Resource in Finnish burn rehabilitation

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Objectives

Healing physically from a burn injury is only one step in the process of rehabilitation. After hospitalization burn survivors have to face challenges such as scarring and altered appearance. Many survivors find peer support to be one of the most helpful resources in the recovery process. Little research is available on the role of peer support in post burn recovery.

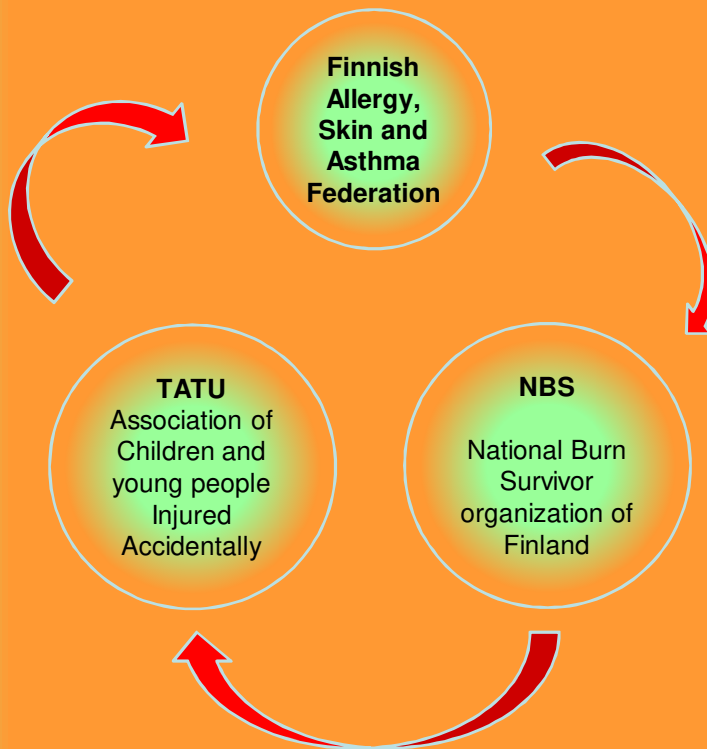
This presentation describes the implementation of peer support for burn survivors in sparsely populated country with long distances and a few actors. Main focus is to increase the awareness of healthcare professionals about the importance of peer support in this patient group.

Method:

Co-operation with three active players of Finnish burn survivors' organizations.



Burncamp at Padasjoki



Get together at a campfire



The path of recovery

Results

National Burn Survivor (NBS) organization of Finland organizes every summer and autumn a family camp meeting for burn survivors and their families. Aim of these camps is to get together and meet peers who have been through the process of burn recovery. Maintaining the network of supporters and cooperation is of the uttermost importance.

NBS is member of Finnish Allergy, Asthma and Skin Federation, which trains supporters, maintains closed Facebook group and offers web-based rehabilitation. Association of Children Injured accidentally (TATU) organizes family camps and adaptation training for burnt children and young people. Websites for families offer information on burns and support available.

Conclusions

More research should be obtained from burn survivors' views of peer support. How do they view this intervention and services of NBS?

To ensure this valuable voluntary activity, more trained supporters, especially young people are needed. Web-based rehabilitation is a trend of the day, but does it replace face-to-face support?

More attention should be paid to the knowledge of health care professionals about this resource and its potential in the recovery process of burns.