



# The Impact of Peer Support Group Programs on Psychosocial Outcomes for Burn Survivors & Caregivers: A Review of the Literature



Mariel S. Bello MA, Sarah A. Stoycos MA, Brenda T. Carrera LCSW, Dawn M. Kurakazu OTR, John N. Briere PhD, Warren L. Garner MD, Justin Gillenwater MD, & Haig A. Yenikomshian MD  
 Regional Burn Center, LAC+USC Medical Center, Los Angeles, CA  
 Division of Plastic Surgery, Keck School of Medicine of USC, Los Angeles, CA  
 Department of Psychology, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA

## INTRODUCTION

- Peer support group programs are an integral component of the short- and long-term psychosocial recovery of patients with burn injuries and their caregivers.
- Support groups assist clients with adjustment to their traumatic injury.
- Evidence-based literature on availability and standardization of support groups is scarce.

## SIGNIFICANCE

- This study aims to review the literature on the different types of peer support group programs and their subsequent effect on psychosocial outcomes for burn survivors and their caregivers.

## METHODS

- We utilized PubMed, PsycINFO, and Medline to conduct a systematic review of the literature published between 1990-2018.

## RESULTS

Study	Sample	Design	Main Finding
<b>Outpatient Peer Support Group Programs</b>			
Badger & Royse (2010a)	N = 350 adults	Surveys	Improved peer support, life satisfaction, social integration, productivity, & quality of life.
Badger & Royse (2010b)	N = 30 adults	Interviews	Improved, hope, positive self-image, & less isolation.
Davis et al. (2014)	N = 6 adults	Interviews	Improved sense of community, relationships, & integration of injury into identity.
Grieve et al. (2017)	N = 601 adults	Surveys	Higher levels of social interactions, social activities, & work.
Papamikrouli (2017)	N = 264 adults	Surveys	Improved sense of belonging & being understood.
Sproul et al. (2009)	N = 117 adults	Surveys	Increased hope about future, adjustment to recovery process, & higher agency.
Tolley et al. (2014)	N = 27 adults	Surveys	Increased hope, motivation, emotional support, social contact, & self-esteem.
<b>Inpatient Peer Support Group Programs</b>			
Barnett et al. (2017)	N = 84 kids & parents	Interviews	Improvement in processing guilt, self-blame, fears, & concerns about future & death.
Bauman & James (1990)	N = 15 kids & parents	Interviews	Improved coping during hospitalization.
Komhaber et al. (2015)	N = 21 adults	Interviews	Improved reassurance, hope, & motivation.
<b>Combined Outpatient/Inpatient Peer Support Group Programs</b>			
Chedekel (2001)	N = 28 teens	Surveys	Improved peer support & hospital experience.
Seehausen et al. (2015)	N = 214 adults	Surveys	Declines in depression, anxiety, post-traumatic symptom severity, & increased optimism and quality of life.
<b>Burn Camp Programs</b>			
Armstrong et al. (2018)	N = 23 children	Surveys	Higher social comfort & satisfaction with appearance.
Arnoldo et al. (2006)	N = 43 children	Surveys	Majority of patients had no improvement in self-esteem.
Bakker et al. (2011)	N = 173 children	Surveys	Short-term effect of burn camp participation was found on the 'satisfaction with appearance' component of body image.
Biggs et al. (1997)	N = 43 children	Surveys	37% of the children demonstrated an increase in self-esteem to varying degrees, whereas 30% showed no change, & 3% exhibited a decrease in self-esteem.
Piazza-Waggoner et al (2004)	N = 33 children	Surveys	No significant changes in psychosocial adjustment & social competence (i.e., social skills and interactions).
Rimmer et al. (2007)	N = 83 children	Surveys	Short-term improvement in self-esteem which decreased long-term.
Tropez et al. (2017)	N = 33 children	Surveys	Lower levels of anxiety & depression & increased self-esteem at 6 months.
Williams et al. (2004)	N = 52 teens	Interviews	Improvement in self-acceptance, self-confidence, & self-esteem.

- 20 articles met our inclusion criteria: **7** for outpatient groups, **3** for inpatient groups, **2** for combined inpatient/outpatient groups, & **8** for burn camps.
- **Outpatient Programs:** All articles demonstrated significant improvements in psychosocial outcomes (i.e., life satisfaction, acceptance of self, and reduced isolation).
- **Inpatient Programs:** All articles reported improvements in emotional processing, caregiver concerns, and coping skills.
- **Combined Inpatient/Outpatient Programs:** 2 articles demonstrated substantial declines in post-traumatic stress, depression, and anxiety.
- **Burn Camps:** Findings were inconsistent for burn camps, such that 5 articles reported improvements in self-esteem, social integration, and reduced anxiety and depression, while 3 demonstrated no changes.

## CONCLUSIONS

- Outpatient, inpatient, and combined peer support group regimens were consistently beneficial for burn survivors and caregivers.

## LESSONS LEARNED

- Peer support group programs are necessary for effective burn survivor and caregiver healing, regardless of format.
- Our ABA-certified burn center is currently working on a study to determine optimal inpatient/outpatient regimens of peer support.

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