



Keynotes • Workshops • Breakout Sessions

Jessica Phipps is a professional public speaker, disease self-management educator, and award-winning social worker. Jessica has been a professional medical social worker for over twenty years, with eighteen of those years dedicated to educating and empowering individuals with Chronic Kidney Disease to live their best life.

As a Nephrology Social Worker in a leadership position with an international dialysis provider, she has been at the fore front of the profession, developing the social work role in the medical setting, and providing professional development to social workers and allied health professionals, in the renal industry. She also holds extensive knowledge on policy, regulatory and compliance guidelines in the renal industry from her experience as a facility administrator and clinic group operations manager.

Holding a Masters of Social Work from Rutgers University, she has presented at multiple NKF Spring Clinical Meetings and internationally. Jessica was the 2011 National Kidney Foundation Merit Award recipient, and inducted as a Fellow of the National Kidney Foundation in 2017, recognizing her commitment to patients, the development of the profession, and her efforts to raise awareness of chronic kidney disease. In 2019, she was appointed to the National Kidney Foundation National Legislative Advocacy Team as the professional advocate for New Jersey. Jessica works with professional groups, community-based programs, and the faith-based community amongst others promoting wellness management and championing the elimination of health disparities by keeping health in the conversation.

Her Cause

Kidney disease has been described as the most neglected chronic disease, and is the 9th leading cause of death globally. Health literacy is an important predictor of adequate self-management and control of any chronic disease. It impacts health behavior, health outcomes, communication with providers, adherence to treatment regimens, and health care costs. African Americans in the United States have lower health literacy and suffer the widest gaps in chronic kidney disease outcomes. African Americans have a 3.5 times higher prevalence of kidney disease, are 10 times more likely to develop hypertension related kidney disease and are 3 times more likely to progress to kidney failure compared to Caucasians. Witnessing this, Jessica founded, Better Your Living in 2017 as a platform to establish a culture of practicing preventative health, to decrease health disparities and positively influence outcomes through health literacy education, behavior change and disease self-management education.

Her Inspiration

Working with a large dialysis provider for over 18 years, Jessica has met with hundreds of kidney disease patients providing pre and post dialysis kidney disease education. Many persons did not realize that they had kidney disease until they were in the emergency room with kidney failure needing dialysis, most of whom were diabetic and hypertensive for years, the two leading causes of kidney disease. Most had never met with an endocrinologist or nephrologist. Others who were reviewing their dialysis treatment options prior to starting treatment, had the same story. The resounding sentiment was, "if I knew that this would put me in a dialysis chair, I would have taken better care, no one told me. . . I did not know"

PRESENTATIONS

What is your GFR?

Have you asked your doctor . . . What is my GFR? GFR is Glomerular Filtration Rate and it is a measure of how well your kidneys are functioning. 23 million Americans have kidney disease. That's 1 in 7 people. Many are not even aware. There can be no symptoms until the damage to the kidneys are extensive. If you have high blood pressure or diabetes, you are at risk of kidney disease. If you have kidney disease you need to know how to slow the progression, self-manage the disease and the treatment options available for kidney failure.

Be Prepared for Your Doctor's Visit

Making smart choices about your health starts with good communication between you and your doctor. How well you talk with your doctor determines the quality of care you receive. Know the right questions to ask so that you understanding your diagnosis, treatment and recovery process. The goal is to help you make the most of your doctor's visit.

Health is a Family Affair

Sharing family health information saves lives. Knowing helps you to figure out your risk factors for health problems like stroke, cancer, diabetes and heart disease and gives you the ability to practice appropriate preventative health measures. The goal is to guide you in starting the conversation and developing a family health history profile.

Working Your Wheel

The Wellness Wheel explores the interconnectedness of the dimensions of wellness that need to keep in balance for you to thrive. After a self-assessment of your physical, financial, spiritual, environmental, emotional, social and intellectual wellness we will explore lifestyle management techniques to help you maximize your potential throughout your lifespan.