

Andreae, Susan J
Statement of Research Interests and Plans

My primary research interest is developing and evaluating patient centered approaches towards improving daily functions and achieving maximum health in individuals with chronic diseases living in rural communities. I am specifically interested in partnering with community peer coaches to deliver family-centered programs.

Having earned a bachelor's of science degree in psychology as well as a bachelor's of fine arts degree in graphic design, I became involved in a community-engaged trial testing the effectiveness of peer support and diabetes education, first as a graphic artist and then as its program manager. This trial made it clear to me the great potential of well-designed, evidence-based educational materials and effective communication via peer support for improving the health of individuals living with chronic illnesses, especially those with lower health literacy. This experience inspired me to complete coursework in developing and testing the effectiveness of health education programs, leading to a master's degree in health behavior in 2011 and a doctoral degree in health education and promotion in 2015.

While obtaining both degrees, I continued to work fulltime as a program manager for a series of community-engaged research grants. In my role as both the program manager and graduate student, I was fortunate to be mentored by a group of accomplished researchers in chronic disease management as well as work closely with our community partners, peer coaches, and study participants. It was through these interactions with peer coaches and patients I became interested in developing and evaluating health initiatives that involves the individual with the chronic disease as well as their entire family. This led me to my current project in which I am leading a pilot study to develop and evaluate the feasibility of a family-centered intervention delivered by community peer coaches to prevent diabetes in youth and better manage diabetes in adults.

My future research goals are to continue to build on the results of this pilot project for a larger grant. In addition, I will continue to develop partnerships with community members to develop, evaluate, and disseminate peer coach delivered programs that will help individuals living with chronic illness to improve their health and quality of life.