

THE HANGOUT UPDATE

JANUARY SESSION

1/26/2023



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Health & Wellness Coordinator

In January, we completed our monthly session of **“THE HANGOUT - A support group for individuals impacted by Sickle Cell Disease.”** The topic was **“Health & Wellness”**. Thanks to everyone who joined in! If you were unable to participate in The Hangout this month, please enjoy this summary of the discussion.

GROUP NORMS

We want the Hangouts to be a safe, supportive space for all participants. We reviewed group norms briefly at the start of the session, and as always, if you have any questions or concerns about the norms, feel free to contact Taisha Mathieu at taisha@mythreesicklers.org.

TOPIC

This month, we discussed health and wellness. The Hangout session was very rich in meditation, fortitude, courage, and information. It brought everyone together learning about the importance of time with oneself, and others, and more importantly being reminded that we do not define ourselves by our limitations but by our strong victories.

After a 5 minute meditation, we started off by asking participants about any quotes, bible verses, or daily affirmations that provide them peace and serenity in a life that can be full of noise and distraction.

The quote “Man said no, but God said yes” encourages one to live outside the limited space doctors have chosen. We had individuals who were told that they would not be able to graduate elementary school, let alone complete 3 degrees and try to accomplish another. We had warriors who were once told they would not be able to physically bear children.

Labels such as “The Sick One” presumes weakness and vulnerability which can later impact the self-esteem of an individual. Fortunately, perseverance and strong support to keep moving forward when you are told to stay back combats all dark speed bumps life can throw.

We discussed the process of maintaining a healthy schedule that brings mental and emotional control. For instance, having a positive routine within oneself can help a person's day move a lot smoother than one would expect. Although no one knows how his or her day will go, a person with sickle cell knows what can happen from waking up with so much pain that he or she feels like not doing anything, starting the day in a hurry, and forgetting to take medication and having to deal with the consequences later in the day or week.

The evening centered around the essence of sharing and learning from individuals who come from different backgrounds, coming together from not only having an illness but having difficulties living a life of complete independence. Many participants acknowledged that their past challenges with pain, hospitalizations, surgeries, medical accessibility issues, and more, may be difficult but not the deal breaker to living long and healthy lives.

