

Social Work Support Services for Heart Transplant Patients

What is the role of a transplant social worker?

The social worker is an important member of the transplant team. They provide support for those in the transplant evaluation phase, after transplant, and who have received a Ventricular Assist Device (VAD).

Some of the services your social worker provides include:

- Helping you to understand and cope with the emotional, psychological and social issues related to transplant.
- Counseling and emotional support for you and your family after surgery
- Connecting you with resources if you have any other needs related to your transplant such as:
 - Financial assistance
 - Insurance issues
 - Medication costs
 - Transportation and parking
 - Lodging and meals

What barriers can transplant social workers help with?

There are a few barriers that can prevent you from being listed on the transplant waiting list. Transplant social workers can connect you with the resources you need to help you overcome these barriers.

Common barriers that prevent you from being listed include:

- Tobacco use
- Mental health needs
- Substance abuse

What additional education and support services are available?

Social workers lead educational and support groups, and refer patients and families to resources throughout the entire transplant process. There are many ways in which you and your family can receive support and guidance:

- Attend monthly support group meetings
- Read the quarterly newsletters
- Attend the bi-annual social gatherings
- Participate in the peer mentoring program
- Contact the directory of patients who have made their information available to share with other patients

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