

# Couples intervention may help partners of patients with diabetes

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A new *Diabetic Medicine* study reveals that couples interventions may have beneficial effects for partners of individuals with type 2 diabetes.

The study was a three-arm randomized telephone intervention trial comparing outcomes of couples calls (CC), individual calls (IC), and diabetes education calls (DE). While the focus of the trial was on diabetes outcomes for the patients, the authors also assessed whether partners who participated derived benefit.

Compared with partners in the IC and DE groups (who were not involved), CC partners (who were actively involved to promote collaboration and communal coping) had greater reductions in diabetes distress (the worries and stress they feel because their partner has diabetes), greater increases in marital satisfaction, and some improvements in [diastolic blood pressure](#). There were no significant group differences in [weight loss](#), or in changes related to diet and activity that might foster weight loss, suggesting that these behaviors would need to be directly targeted at partners to help them change.

"Providers often worry about engaging partners, for fear they'll become a member of the 'diabetes police' and cause tension in the relationship. We found that involved partners benefited emotionally, and also felt better about their relationship, as they worked together to deal with the challenges of [diabetes](#)," said lead author Dr. Paula Trief, of SUNY Upstate Medical University.

**More information:** P. M. Trief et al, Two for one? Effects of a couples intervention on partners of persons with Type 2 diabetes: a randomized controlled trial, *Diabetic Medicine* (2018). [DOI: 10.1111/dme.13871](#)

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