HealthChange® Program

Why HealthChange® in Alberta?

In response to rising demands for effective, sustainable self-management support for Alberta’s health care providers, Alberta Health Services (AHS) adopted HealthChange® Methodology. The Methodology was developed by HealthChange Associates, a credible, international organization, specializing in health behaviour change and patient-centred care.

HealthChange® Methodology was successfully piloted in Alberta from December 2012 to July 2013. Workshops continue to be offered in all 5 zones, to health care providers and administrators both within and outside of AHS.

About HealthChange® Methodology

HealthChange® Methodology supports health care providers to embed person-centred care into clinical consultations, care planning, discharge planning, disease management, health promotion, rehabilitation, return to work and other health services.

HealthChange® Methodology complements health care providers’ existing skill sets. It provides health care providers with techniques to recognize and address potential patient barriers to action before they occur. In particular, it provides practical strategies for dealing effectively with potentially difficult and complex patients.

The methodology does not add time to consultations. It restructures consultation tasks to align with the patient information needs and supports patient knowledge, understanding and motivation to act on recommendations. It can save clinicians considerable time by avoiding frustrating circular conversations and unnecessarily lengthy assessments and education. It can reduce waitlists, no-shows and the number of patients that don’t comply with health recommendations. Consistent use of the methodology can significantly increase the satisfaction of both health care providers and patients.

The methodology is based on best practice and can be applied to the delivery of care at face to face, telephone, and group appointments and education sessions. When implemented, the methodology has been demonstrated to improve patient adherence to treatment, lifestyle, referral and self-management recommendations.

HealthChange® Methodology promotes shared decision making in a way that balances clinical duty of care with a patient’s right to make fully-informed decisions about their health. The focus is on achieving the best clinical, health and quality of life outcomes possible for each patient, given their unique circumstances. HealthChange® Methodology provides health care providers and organizations with an evidence-informed behaviour change pathway to complement usual clinical pathways for the prevention or treatment of chronic conditions and rehabilitation from injury or illness.
HealthChange® Methodology is comprised of an integrated suite of tools including a decision support framework to help health care providers work more effectively and efficiently with patients.


2. A set of clearly defined *Person-Centred Practice Principles*: to operationalize person-centred care, communication and health literacy support in a way that makes these factors measurable.

3. A functional way of thinking about barriers to action and facilitators for change: to facilitate recognition and understanding of the most common types of barriers for engaging patients in treatment recommendations.

4. A set of *Essential Behaviour Change Techniques*: the minimum set required to identify and address potential barriers to action when they are present.

5. A *10 Step Decision Framework* to guide health care providers: to know when and why a patient is unlikely to adhere to recommendations and to apply the appropriate principles and techniques to help them to understand their conditions and treatment options; identify personal motivators; make fully-informed decisions; take action, and self-regulate for improved health and quality of life outcomes over time.

6. A set of skills development, quality assurance and capacity building tools and mechanisms: for frontline staff and organisations to assist, measure and track staff transfer of training into practice and to capture client behaviour change data for reporting against clinical outcomes.
Theoretical Foundations

HealthChange® Methodology draws from similar principles and techniques to those used in motivational interviewing, solution-focused coaching and cognitive behavioural therapy. However, it differs from these approaches by providing an overarching framework for the integration of these approaches and others into specific clinical or health promotion programs. It also refines the techniques used in other practice models for easier, more effective use in the brief time frames required by clinical consultations.

See www.healthchange.com for brief videos, published papers, additional background information and freely downloadable tools.