

Self-Management Support

There is increasing evidence that effective self-management is essential to optimizing health outcomes for people with chronic conditions.¹

Effective self-management support and links to patient-oriented community resources help to activate and inform patients and families to better cope with the challenges of living with and treating chronic illness.²

Effective chronic disease management services focus on supporting patients with building self-management skills and empowering them to monitor their symptoms and manage the impact that their condition has on them physically, emotionally, and socially.

Successful self-managers understand their condition and treatment options, and are actively involved in the development of their care plan and follow it.

Self-management support encompasses the actions and behaviors that others, such as health professionals and family, carry out to assist an individual with a chronic disease to self-manage.³

Tips for Supporting Self-Management

- Begin any program or service with the clinician or facilitator explaining their role and allow time for the patient(s) to introduce themselves and state what they are hoping to gain from the service or program.
- Identify knowledge gaps by finding out what the patient knows, expects, and has tried. Utilize active listening skills.
- Focus support on enhancing patient self-management skills (i.e., decision making, problem solving, and action planning) and confidence in managing their condition or symptoms. Consider referring patients to the [Better Choices, Better Health Program®](#) to assist them with continuing to build their self-management skills between medical appointments or classes.
- Consider the individual goals of the patient(s) and tailor material, as needed.
- Assist patient(s) with identifying and addressing limitations/barriers.
- Assess patient understanding throughout a consult/class. Ensure that all discussion and materials are clear and concise using plain language so that all patients can understand, regardless of their health literacy level. Use the teach-back technique and avoid using medical jargon.
- Allow patients in a group class to learn from each other. Facilitators are encouraged to ask questions to make connections. Facilitation training can help staff develop their skills and confidence with providing self-management support and resolving conflict when delivering group education.
- Schedule follow-up to support the adoption and maintenance of health behaviours.
- Arrange referrals as needed in collaboration with the patient. Obtain patient approval before submitting the referral.
- Support the patient with navigating the health care system by making sure that the patient is aware of where to find additional information.
- Provide information on community supports as needed.

References:

1. Battersby, M., Von Korff, M., et al.: Twelve evidence-based principles for implementing self-management support in primary care. *The Joint Commission Journal on Quality and Patient Safety*, 36(12), 561–570, 2010.
2. Wagner E.H., et al.: Improving chronic illness care: Translating evidence into action. *Health Aff (Millwood)* 20:64–78, Nov.–Dec. 2001.
3. Provincial Self-Management Working Group Terms of Reference 2012

Provincial CDM Self-Management Team July 2015