Collaborative Self-Management Support
What Is It?

In order to maintain healthy lives, people with chronic, or long-term, conditions and their families have to manage their condition from day to day. This self-management often involves understanding and following complex medical regimens, and planning and following through with changes in lifestyle, such as weight loss, stress reduction, or increasing exercise.

Self-management involves three different kinds of tasks: care of the body, adapting everyday activities and roles, and dealing with the emotions arising from having a long-term condition. Self-management support refers to the information, education, resources, and care offered to people with chronic conditions to help them deal with their illness. The goal of self-management support is to strengthen people’s competence and confidence to manage their condition, make informed decisions about care, and adopt healthy behaviors.

Recognizing the central role patients and families play in managing chronic conditions, collaborative self-management support means that strong relationships are built among all members of the health care team, including the patient and their family. Collaborative self-management support shifts health care from a traditional provider- or system-centered model to a patient- and family-centered approach. Patients, their family members, and providers respect each others’ expertise, share information, build a mutual understanding of the patient’s goals, and together create a plan that all can use to guide care at home and in the clinical setting.

Health care organizations can support effective collaborative self-management by providing leadership and resources. They will probably need to redesign or improve their organization to promote more effective cooperation among providers, and between providers and patients and families. Health care leaders can encourage all key constituents – patients, families, health care providers, and the community – to create partnerships to facilitate change and sustainability.

Selected References


