The health coaching approach:
A different way to talk with patients

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The Performance Coach
What is Health Coaching?

- In the clinical context “performance” = self-management
- Health coaching is releasing a person’s potential to maximise their own health
  - Health coaching aims to raise awareness and increase responsibility for health
What is Health Coaching?

• “A behavioural intervention that facilitates participants in establishing and attaining health-promoting goals in order to change lifestyle-related behaviours, with the intent of reducing health risks, improving self-management of chronic conditions, and increasing health-related quality of life”

Van Ryn & Heaney (1997)
Critical elements in a health coaching approach…

| Supports a person to change their relationship to their health | • Taps into their potential to self care  
• Raises their awareness and sense of responsibility  
• Supports them to actively self manage  
• Increases their confidence and motivation to act |
| Requires a different kind of conversation | • Tailored to the individual, their agenda and goals  
• Requires partnership and transformation in the clinician/patient relationship  
• Incorporates a number of health psychology techniques (e.g., MI) and coaching skills |
| Useful in | • Improving lifestyle  
• Reducing health risks  
• Chronic disease management  
• Medicines management  
• Decision support |
| Aims to | • Increase health-related quality of life  
• Improve patient experience of the health system |
Fear as driver of the consultation dynamic?

**Existential Anxiety**
- "If I'm worried about something and I don't go to the doctors, I might die... but if I do go, they might tell me I'm going to die."

**Interactional Anxiety**
- "Will I be able to say what I need to say? Will I be able to ask what I need to ask? And will I be heard?"

**Entitlement Anxiety**
- "If I go to the doctors and I'm not ill I might be humiliated. Am I entitled to present myself as ill for this reason, at this time?"

**Patient's Fears**
- "Patients are unstoppable and insatiable. Will I be able to get what I need and shut them up. They expect me to solve their problem – will I have to handle disappointment/anger?"

**Doctor's Fears**
- "If I miss something vital the patient might die or suffer (My professional identity is threatened)"

**Entitlement Anxiety**
- "What if I get into trouble if I prescribe/refer... guidelines, targets, budgets, evidence-based medicine, etc.,?"

Adapted from: *When doctors and patients talk: making sense of the consultation*, Martin Fischer and Gill Ereaut, *The Health Foundation* June 2012
Different kind of conversation

“Instead of treating patients as passive recipients of care, they must be viewed as partners in the business of healing, players in the promotion of health, managers of healthcare resources, and experts on their own circumstances, needs, preferences and capabilities.”

(Coulter, 2011)
Requires a mindset shift

"mindset" {noun}

a set of beliefs or a way of thinking that determines one's behavior, outlook and mental attitude.
Health Coaching Skills Development

- Principles and models from Health Psychology & Behavioural Medicine
- Skills & techniques from Performance & Development Coaching
- Knowledge and skills of Health Practitioners
Health Coaching Skills Development

- Health knowledge
- Health recommendations
- Diagnostic skills
- Consultation skills
- Questioning skills
- Listening skills
- Problem solving skills
- Patient – clinician relationship

Principles and models from Health Psychology & Behavioural Medicine
- Behaviour Change theory
- Social Cognition theory
- Patient Activation
- Motivational Interviewing
- Stages of Change
- Positive Psychology
- Mindful awareness
- Cognitive Behaviour Therapy

Skills & techniques from Performance & Development Coaching
- Goal setting
- Coaching models
- Coaching competencies
- Range of approaches
- Awareness & Responsibility
- Focus on potential & emergence
- Using Challenge & Rapport
- Scaling

Knowledge and skills of Health Practitioners

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How do your conversations lead to outcomes? 
Working with goals

• What is the value of setting a goal?
• Who’s goal? Patient’s or clinician’s?
• What factors might influence patients’ willingness to set a goal?
• What factors might influence clinicians’ willingness to work on setting a goal with patients?
How do you see your patients?
Bi-focal vision

What is the problem?
(Patient is a problem)

What is the potential?
(Patient is resourceful
and holds the solution)

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How do you flex your style for different consultations?
A range of approaches

**Telling**

**PUSH**
- Solving patient’s problem for them - Offering the clinician’s resources & experiences

**DIRECTIVE**
- Telling

**Asking**

**PULL**
- Enabling patient to solve their own problem - Accessing the patient’s resources & experiences

**NON-DIRECTIVE**
- Listening to understand
  - Reflecting
  - Summarising
  - Paraphrasing
  - Clarifying understanding
  - Asking questions that raise awareness
  - Giving feedback
  - Making suggestions
  - Offering guidance
  - Giving advice

**TELLING / TRAINING**
How do you reflect on the dynamics of the consultation? Karpman Drama Triangle
How do you effectively challenge your patients?
Challenge and Rapport

The Performance Coach
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Effective training approaches

Health Coaching Skills Development

- Principles of coaching & behaviour change
- Time to allow mindset shift
- Application to real issues
- Opportunities to practice skills
- Opportunities for feedback
- Highly experiential using a coaching style
- Fast paced and challenging
- Applied and skills based
Key challenges in changing style

- Learning to be less directive is very difficult
- Flexing one’s default consulting position takes a lot of effort
- It is uncomfortable to bring more challenge to conversations with patients
- Working with a coaching approach when colleagues are not
- Identifying which patients to focus on
- Managing time to support behaviour change
- Managing other responsibilities (QOF, managing risk, other required interventions)
Key themes in what clinicians say they have learned about having different conversations

- The patient is resourceful and holds the solution
- A coaching approach = partnership with patients = sharing responsibility
- Finding out what the patient wants (goal) is key
- Being able to flex approach yields positive results
- Supportive challenge is possible
- Coaching techniques are broadly applicable for supporting behaviour change
- It is possible to coach in 10 minutes

"for the first time I can see a way to move my patients with chronic conditions into a zone where they can make progress themselves"

General Practitioner