



Training for GP practices

Better Conversations – active patients (30 minutes)

The following guide is to help you

- ✓ Introduce you to ways that patients are learning about taking **greater control** in conversations with health professionals
- ✓ Learn of **training opportunities** for you to become a health champion and/or a health coach

And so this guide looks at:

1. How patients are learning to take greater control over their own health
2. Models for **better conversations**
3. What to do next after reading this – including a resource from Better Conversations

Underlined text indicates a web link to a resource

"...being compassionate, caring and a good communicator are central to being a good MH nurse."

[#MHnursingFuture](#) Dr. Steve Jones, mental health nurse and lecturer [@EHU FOHSC](#)
[@edgehill](#) 17th April 2018

1. **How patients are learning to take greater control over their own health**

Many patients may have had a lot of contact with health professionals, but little day-to-day understanding of their role in managing their health, or how to communicate with health professionals.

Dr Phil Hammond suggests that patients can start by greeting any health professional and shaking their hand to gain their attention, and so promote the observation of any signs of poor health. (**Phil Hammond (2015) *Staying Alive. How to Get the Best from the NHS.* Quercus**).

In the cases of appointments, Hammond and others suggest the following for patients to ask:

- 1) *What treatment is being proposed?*
- 2) *What are the risks?*
- 3) *What are the benefits?*
- 4) *What are the alternatives?*
- 5) *What would happen if I did nothing?*

Other tips are offered through the Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH) Level 2 Understanding Health Improvement qualification. West Lancashire CVS promotes this course in the local area to develop more volunteer community health champions, but it is also designed for the health professional who is seeking to improve communication skills.

For example, see the **Role of effective communication in promoting lifestyle/behaviour changes:**

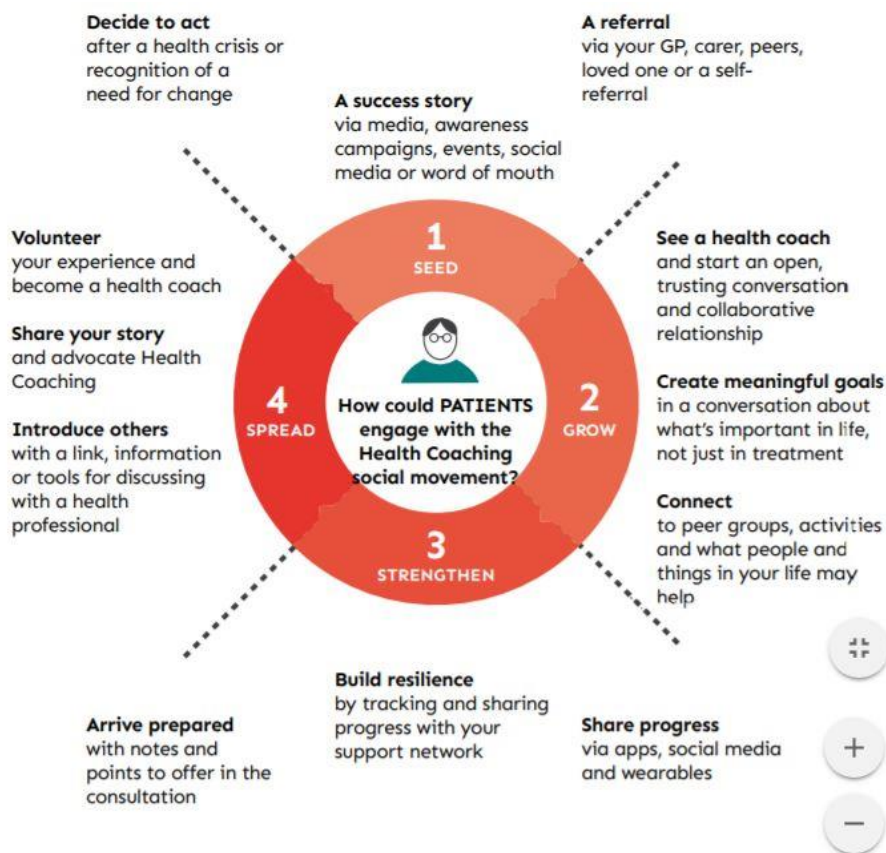
- ✓ Using the right approach
- ✓ Using the right words
- ✓ Motivating statements
- ✓ Choosing the right moment
- ✓ Allowing people time to consider change
- ✓ Only discussing health changing behaviour if the person is ready to change

From: [RSPH Level 2 Understanding Health Improvement \(online link\)](#)

2. Models for better conversations

The following model is from [better conversation tools for action. The health coaching coalition \(online link\)](#). The model for patients suggests the four stages of:

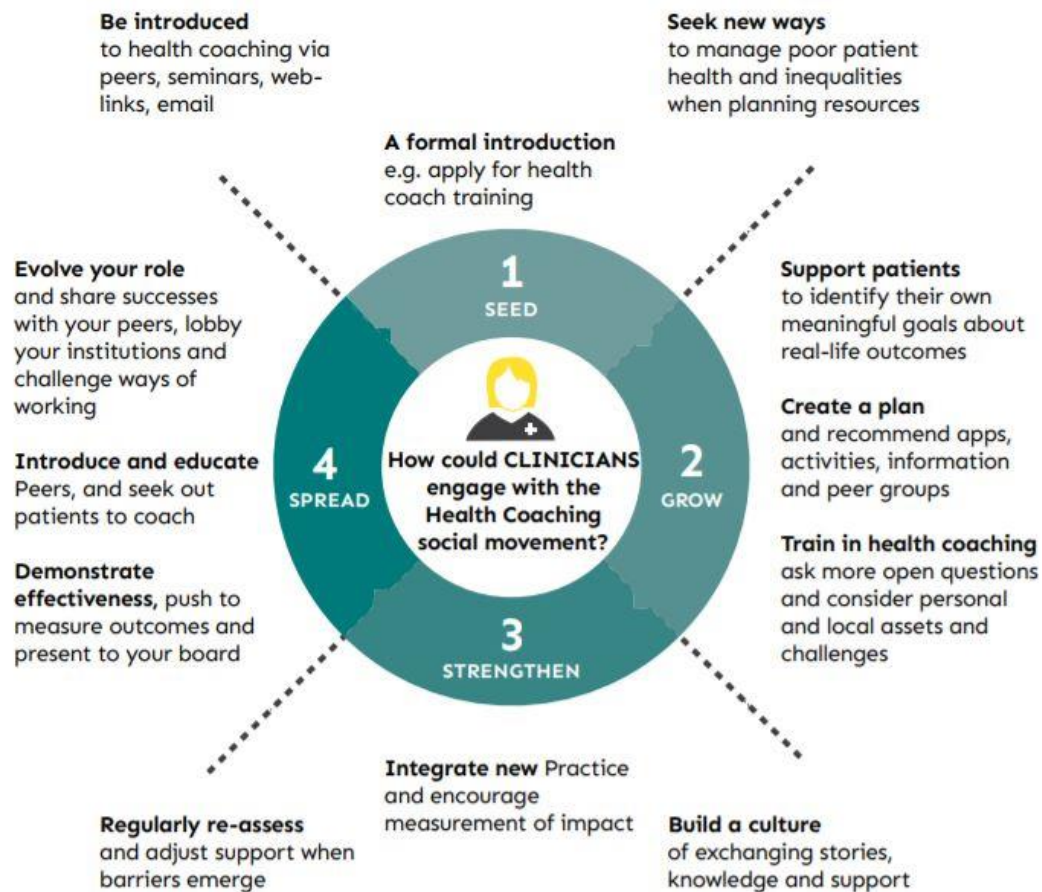
- 1) seed – including ‘Decide to act’
- 2) grow – including ‘Connect’
- 3) strengthen – including ‘Arrive prepared’ (for an appointment)
- 4) spread – including ‘Introduce others’



This is useful for your awareness of the patient's potential to become a more active conversation partner. The health coaching coalition recommended path for health professionals is:

- 1) seed – including 'Seek new ways to manage poor patient health'
- 2) grow – includes 'Support patients to identify their own meaningful goals'
- 3) strengthen – includes 'Regularly reassess'
- 4) spread – includes '... seek out patients to coach'

Consider the following and reflect on whether: a) you are already starting to follow this model and how/ to what extent; b) how you could move towards this model of working:





3. What to do next after reading this

- ✓ Become a **health champion** as the focus is on developing good communication skills around health & health promotion. There is a two-day national qualification for health care professionals:
Public Health (RSPH) Level 2 Understanding Health Improvement qualification
West Lancashire CVS is an RSPH Centre and runs the course. Contact helenj@wlcvs.org for more details.

- ✓ Look out for opportunities to develop your professional skills further by becoming a **health coach** as part of a wider model around a more active patient-health professional relationship. Visit <http://www.betterconversation.co.uk/> to find out more about the health coaching coalition – join the community.

- ✓ For some tips on better conversations, see the health coaching PowerPoint slides (a taster of what full training would offer).