



HEALTH COACHING IN FOCUS

Supporting behaviour change and self-mangement

The following key findings are summarized from a working session on health coaching with 20 chronic disease subject matter experts across the health care industry.

The working session was held at McMaster University in 2017 by the Health Leadership and Learning Network, York University in partnership with McMaster University. The session featured 20 chronic disease subject matter experts from hospitals, community health centres, health associations, and universities. The session reviewed existing research evidence and explored how emerging health care needs of the population can be addressed through new and specialized health coach training for an inter-professional audience. The working session was conducted using an electronic meeting system (EMS), an innovative facilitation process developed from research at the Queen's School of Business, and was funded by the Federal Development Agency of Southern Ontario.

KEY FINDINGS:

- Health coaching is an evidence-based intervention that can be applied to help fill needs in the current health care system, and to support self-managed care outside of health care provider appointments.
- Health coaches work with individuals to motivate and sustain behaviour change, and help individuals reach their health goals. Health coaches use tools to empower and engage individuals ultimately leading to self management, which can potentially reduce escalating costs of health care expenditure.
- Health coaching is a set of skills that can be applied across various settings and contexts but there is a need to define the scope of practice and maintain quality control. The distinction between health coaching, self-managed education, and self-management care must be made, to understand how they can complement each other.
- Health coaching skills should include (1) counselling and behaviour modification training skills, (2) communications skills that build rapport and empathy, and (3) an understanding of chronic diseases and their complexity, health care systems, and community resources.
- Health coaches do not need to be designated as a regulated health profession at this stage, although there is consensus that health coaching should ideally be performed by regulated health professionals/allied health professional or individuals who have demonstrated equivalent education or experience in the community or health-related field. However, complementary hybrid or tiered approaches and strategies to health coaching can be adapted to facilitate scalability of health coaching intervention, i.e. regulated health professionals training/supervising 'lay' or 'peer' coaches who work in community setting, peer-to-peer coaching programs, lifestyle and wellness health coaches vs. chronic disease management health coaches etc.
- A tiered approach to health coaching can expand reach of intervention, as long as the roles are clear and complementary. A critical mass of health coaches are needed for the intervention to be integrated into the health care systems and address population needs, so that it does not become exclusionary based on affordability.

This one-pager was prepared by the Health Leadership and Learning Network at the Faculty of Health, York University. If your organization is interested in health coach training or implementation, please contact us at hlln@yorku.ca or 416.736.2100 x 22170. Website: hlln.info.yorku.ca/healthcoachprofessional