

Enhancing Patient Engagement using supported self-management.



Introduction:

Healthcare professionals plays a crucial role in rehabilitation and the self-management of various long-term health conditions.

However, engaging with diverse patient groups effectively, particularly older people can be challenging:

- those with cognitive challenges / learning difficulties
- patients from non-western backgrounds
- those of low socio-economic status
- people with low health literacy, and
- those with multi heath challenges may require a more personalised approach.

These are my thoughts and experiences over the years with patient engagement and what I think could/should happen

Individualised and Supported Self-Management Plans:

Comprehensive Assessment:

Start with a thorough assessment that considers not only the physical condition but also psychological, social (poor housing / relationships, cultural, and economic factors affecting the patient.

Setting Realistic Goals and action plans:

Collaboratively set achievable, patient-centred goals, adjusting targets based on individual capabilities and circumstances. This enhances buy-in and their motivation.

Culturally Sensitive Practice:

Cultural Competency Training:

Train healthcare professional on cultural sensitivity to understand and respect diverse backgrounds, beliefs, and practices. This increases trust and improves communication between the healthcare professional and people living with long-term health conditions.

Tailored Communication:

Use language and examples that resonate with the patient's cultural context. Involve family members or community leaders as appropriate to bridging gaps in understanding.



Simplifying Communication:

Clear Language and Visual Aids:

Use simple, clear language and visual aids (diagrams, pictures and videos if possible) to explain what supported self-managed is. Avoid medical jargon.

Multilingual Resources:

Provide educational materials in multiple languages and ensure therapists can communicate effectively with patients who may have language barriers.

Empowering Patients through Education:

Health Literacy Programs:

Integrate health literacy initiatives into physiotherapy. Offer workshops that equip patients with skills to understand their health conditions and the importance of using physiotherapy.

Interactive Learning:

How to people learn:

- Reading
- Watching
- Listening
- Practice

Or a combination of the above. So, it is important to have learning materials to have to cater for every learner.

People with hearing or visual impairments:

I encourage healthcare professional to attend a course to learn more about supporting people with hearing or visual impairments. I attended the [ECL Sensory support for individuals online course](#)

Utilise interactive technology, like pictures, apps or videos that engage patients and cater to various literacy levels, making education more accessible.

Here are other example. I have used over the years for people living with persistent pain.

[Understanding pain - and what's to be done about it in 10 minutes](#). Aimed at younger people, but also useful for others I have mentioned in the introduction. Available in many different languages.

Another is [Retrain Pain](#) - also available in different languages and very pictorial



Addressing Socioeconomic Barriers:

Flexible Payment Models:

For those people in Europe, who may have to pay for healthcare, implement sliding scale fees or community health partnerships to reduce financial barriers for low-socioeconomic patients.

Accessible Services:

Provide outreach services in community centres or through home visits to accommodate those who cannot easily travel to medical centres.

Building Therapeutic Relationships:

Focused Relationship Building:

Spend additional time on building rapport, particularly with frail and vulnerable populations and non-western communities. Trust is crucial to build relationships.

Group learning:

Patients best learn from each other, so where practical offer courses, workshops or programmes. Either face to face or via the internet. Healthcare professionals may need training to run and manage groups of patients

Consistency is the key for Health Care Providers:

Where possible, ensure continuity of care with the same healthcare professional to deepen relationships and improve communication.

Utilising Technology:

Telehealth Options:

Expand access through tele-health services especially for those people, who live in rural communities or have mobility problems that allow for remote consultations, particularly beneficial for patients with mobility issues or those living in remote areas.

Patient Monitoring Tools:

Introduce simple mobile applications or digital tools like Zoom, Teams or WhatsApp for patients to monitor their progress and receive reminders for exercises, encouraging self-management and consistency.

Collaborative Care Models:

Interdisciplinary Teams:

Encourage collaboration among healthcare providers, including doctors, social workers, and community health workers, to address the many needs of patients, particularly those with many health challenges. Don't forget to include [Social Prescribing agents](#)

So, to sum up

To improve engagement and outcomes in physiotherapy, a multiagency and personalised approach that addresses the specific needs of diverse patient groups is essential. By focusing on cultural competence, clear communication, education, and the establishment of strong therapeutic relationships, physiotherapy can become more inclusive and effective, ultimately leading to better patient outcomes and satisfaction.

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