

Workshop 13: Making a self-care plan in partnership

Setting goals is an important aspect of self-management. Most of us have found it a helpful experience to allow us to manage the complex job of living well with our health condition. Goal-setting isn't just useful whilst we're attending My Health Dorset.

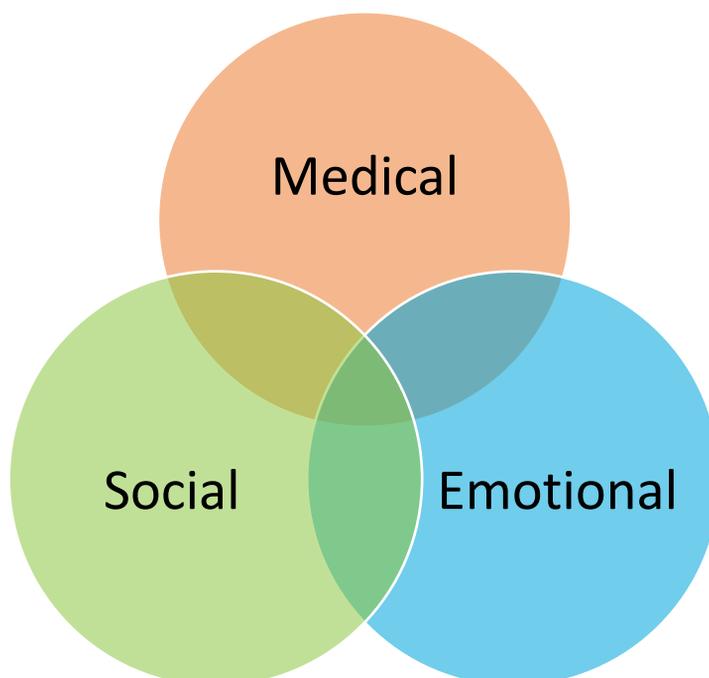
In some areas people living with a health condition are being offered the opportunity to work in partnership with a member of their medical team to plan the management of their condition to produce a Care-Plan.... goal-setting is important to this plan.

The meetings we have with a doctor or other member of the team are often because we are experiencing a health problem - perhaps we feel more unwell than normal. The focus is often on things which are not going well.

A care-planning meeting is a little different because we can find out more about how to self-manage our condition. We can share some of our experiences of life with the condition and we can think about and make shared decisions about its future management. Someone once described it as the doctor or other member of the medical team "looking with, rather than looking at, the patient".

Perhaps you have already been given the opportunity to do this. If so, how did you find it? Was it a helpful experience?

Self-management isn't just about medical management, it is about our emotional care and social lives too, and how each of these affect our everyday lives.



A member of the medical team might have more knowledge and be an expert in the medical aspects of the health condition, but we are the experts in our own lives.

With care-planning we are able to have a meeting to discuss the management of our health condition once a year, or sometimes more frequently. At this meeting we can look at the progress of our health condition and the impact of the way we choose to self-manage, perhaps in the food we eat or the medication we take. We can also look at the impact the condition has on our lives and whether there are actions either we or the health care team can take to lessen this impact. If we feel that other support would be useful to help us to manage our health, we can also agree and arrange this.

During the meeting we will be invited to identify goals to work on - this goal should be **our** goal, so it could be something like “I want to be able to ride my bike again” or “I want to keep out of hospital...”

Your experience of setting goals will really help when the time comes to make your Care-Plan.

Some of you will already have a long-term self-management goal you are working towards. Perhaps you have had to adapt your goal over the weeks. You might also have done some problem-solving, either within the workshops or with family or friends. Just as important as setting a goal is following-up on the goal, so when you make your Care-Plan you will also be asked when and how you would like to follow-up on your goal.

Care-planning in this way is relatively new in this area. Not all health care team members may be fully confident to support people to set achievable and realistic goals which truly support self-management. If you find this to be the case and that you are being directed to set a goal which is medically-directed, you could share with them about attending this series of workshops and offer them some information.