



Core Competencies, Chapter 6

Promoting Natural Supports for Wellness

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Definition and Why Promoting Natural Supports for Wellness is Important to Integrated Complex Care

Wellness is defined as the quality or state of being healthy in body and mind, especially as the result of deliberate effort. It is an approach to healthcare that emphasizes preventing illness and prolonging life, as opposed to emphasizing the treatment of disease. Collaborative care approaches to working with complex patients must include attention to optimizing wellness, and the approach is one of patient activation, patient engagement and negotiated intervention plans. Each person has a unique profile of natural supports and wellness activities that they enjoy and that can positively impact their overall wellbeing. Many of these are connected to other individuals and to communities. Some patients may not have done much thinking about wellness strategies, while others may have some ideas or plans that they have not yet begun to act upon.

An integrated, whole-person approach with complex patients will include attention to wellness, an assessment of gaps, interest, and motivation levels, with team members available to work with patients to remove barriers (internal attitudinal and external such as knowledge of resources, access, cost or social support).

Example

Promoting natural supports was exemplified when a community health worker was assigned to work with a seventy-year-old woman with diabetes and depression. She wanted to do more exercise, but was unsure where to begin. Motivation was not always easy as she lived on her own. She told the health worker that a neighbor had invited her to take walks together in the evening. With the patient’s consent, the community health worker arranged for the three of them to meet at the walking path. Both participants felt the evening walk was a success, and the community health worker built a walking schedule for the two of them. Eventually, the neighbor also convinced the patient to join her for activities at the local senior center, which the patient found quite enjoyable and provided new friendships. At the next appointment, the health worker was very pleased to see how her efforts to engage the neighbor resulted in a number of healthy activities on the patients’ part.

Narrative Description

Enlightened health care teams work with patients on their wellness plans and desires to assess their readiness to engage in wellness activities (via Motivational Interviewing) and to help provide resources for their patients. Such resources can range from the local YMCA or YWCA educational, social and exercise offerings, churches and other religious/spiritual centers. Wellness support may take the form of housing assistance, mindfulness training, community gardens, walking groups, and transportation to access these activities.

Families and friends can be invited to more actively serve as wellness supports in exercise, pleasurable activities, and collaborative cooking of healthy meals. The best approach to identifying natural supports for wellness is through a combination of asking the right patient-centered questions, developing strong family meeting facilitation skills, and having a comprehensive listing of affordable community resources and instructions for to access.

Available Resources

1. Stories from the Road – Tips to develop Natural Supports:
<http://storiesfromtheroad.typepad.com/blog/2014/09/quick-tips-in-how-to-develop-natural-supports-in-the-community.html>
2. National Institute of Health:
<https://www.nih.gov/health-information/science-based-health-wellness-resources-your-community>
3. Inland Empire Health Plan Communities:
<https://ww3.iehp.org/en/our-communities/partners/updates/>
4. Inland Empire:
http://www.handsoninlandempire.org/HOC_Browse_Organizations_Page

BHICCI Plan for Learning / Teaching / Coaching

- Leadership, primary care providers, and care managers READ these materials presented in Core Competency 6 - Promoting Natural Supports for Wellness (Natural Supports) Core Competency, and discuss with the practice coach. *
 - Find a definition of wellness that the team agrees upon and which fits with the goals for patient care and engagement
 - Develop a consistent protocol for wellness assessment which includes an assessment of gaps and opportunities
- Clinical team members ATTEND OR VIEW Web-training or In-Person Presentation: Review of basics of Natural Supports.

Skills Needed for Competency and How will Competence in this area be Measured?

Following completion/verification of the above learning/teaching/coaching plan, each clinician will have the opportunity to practice his/her new skills under supervision. Following this, the supervisor will rate the clinician’s competency in each of the following by:

1. Case discussion of 3 or more complex care patients/clients, or
2. Chart review of 5 or more patients/clients, or
3. Discussion in supervision of clinicians understanding of wellness and patient activation.

COMPETENCY AREA	EVIDENCED BY:	SUPERVISOR’S RATING*
Clinicians demonstrate empathic relationship-building and communication skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinician demonstrates empathy by engaging with patients/clients. • Clinician builds relationships with patients/clients by cultivating openness in interactions. 	1 2 3 4 5
Clinicians demonstrate the capacity to develop a patient wellness assessment and gap analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinicians charting contain wellness assessment. • Clinicians develop wellness assessment in collaboration with patient/client as evidenced by patient/client voice in charting. 	1 2 3 4 5
Clinicians engage patients/clients.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate skills in Motivational Interviewing. • Demonstrate skills in flexible problem solving. 	1 2 3 4 5
Clinicians help patients/clients identify/access and build connections.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop skills and knowledge of community resources. • Demonstrate ability to connect patients/clients to community resources. 	1 2 3 4 5

*1= Excellent results with no need for prompting or support.
 3 = good results and/or required some prompting or support.
 5 = required much support and/or was unable to complete necessary skills.