

Tool 21 – Encouraging and guiding a patient to adopt self care

Why you should use this tool

If you do not already do so, you will need to practise supporting and promoting self care to patients as an integral part of your consultations. You can use this tool to reflect on how and when you encourage patients to self care in your everyday practices.

When to use this tool

Use this tool when you are initially developing your approach to supporting and promoting self care or want to review your progress.

What to do

Complete the table overleaf as part of a training session in which there is a role play where you are the health professional whom a fictitious patient is consulting. Ask others observing the role play or playing the part of the patient to comment on your behaviour. Alternatively, you could audio tape or video three consultations and then review the extent to which you adopted any or all of the eight types of behaviour described in the table overleaf. Subsequently make conclusions, resolve to improve your practice and review at a later date.

Time: allow 10–15 minutes per fictitious patient – a consultation period – plus time for feedback. Allow 1.5–2 hours to review and reflect on the three consultations that were audio or video taped, if you close the approach.



How it works

It gives you the opportunity to reflect on the extent to which you are using the consultation to encourage self care in an optimal way that is challenging and motivating for the patient.

What to do next

Repeat the exercise and review a series of consultations approximately 3 months later to check how things are going, and if patients are more likely to adopt self care. Follow-up specific patients to monitor their progress – eg less frequent consultations with the GP, practice nurse or other care professional about trivial symptoms or minor ailments.

For more information on this tool, please click on [Tool 21](#).



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self care • •
...because health matters •

Guiding a patient to adopt self care

Behaviour	Your comments
<p>Challenging:</p> <p>Question the person's assumptions about their health and well-being. Encourage the person to think things through.</p>	
<p>Offer experience of other patients' changes (eg use anonymised patient stories):</p> <p>Draw parallels with the experiences of others. 'When they faced a similar situation, they...'</p>	
<p>Guiding:</p> <p>Suggest where to look for new knowledge or insights. Point the person in the right direction.</p>	
<p>Suggesting:</p> <p>'Why don't you try this?'</p> <p>'You may find this will help'</p> <p>'Look at...'</p>	
<p>Encouraging:</p> <p>Help the person to reflect on previous achievements. Motivate about new goals. Build on confidence.</p>	
<p>Stimulating:</p> <p>Direct a person's enthusiasm to where it will have the greatest impact.</p>	
<p>Body language:</p> <p>Interested posture, good eye contact, being open and interested.</p>	
<p>Environmental factors:</p> <p>Comfortable setting, not across a desk; protected from interruptions; with an agreed allocation time.</p>	