

Clinician Resources: Self-Management

What is Self-Management?

In order for treatment to be effective, patients need to be an actively engaged partner in their healthcare. Patients can no longer be a passive consumer, and clinicians have the responsibility to teach them differently. Through Self-Management patients are seen as a responsible, educated member of their treatment team.

The goal of self-management is to empower the patient to do the things necessary to improve their health and give them the confidence to manage their illness on an on-going basis. This approach can be effective with any chronic illness including Depression, Diabetes and Heart Disease.

How do I incorporate Self-Management into my work with patients?

- Make sure your patients are fully educated about their illness and have additional sources of information available such as websites or pamphlets.
- Ensure that they understand all of their treatment options.
- Explain to your patients that they are a responsible partner in their treatment and they have the power to help manage their illness through active participation and Self-Management Activities.
- Empower your patients to work on self-management activities and explain how they benefit their physical and emotional health.
 - **Diet:** eating a healthy diet gives the body what it needs to recover and stay well. Using substances such as alcohol and illegal drugs can hinder progress and make symptoms worse.
 - **Exercise:** makes them feel better both physically and emotionally, and it is an essential part of improving health. Starting small such as a 10-20 minute walk daily is a good first step.
 - **Sleep:** Getting good sleep is crucial to maintaining mental and physical health. Suggest simple sleep hygiene techniques such as keeping a structured sleep and wake time, making their bedroom dark and comfortable, no naps and no caffeine.
 - **Stress Management:** stress can affect every aspect of life including emotional health, physical health, their relationships and work. Encourage good stress management techniques such as relaxation, exercise, improving organization and using their social supports.

Read more about self-management at www.depressiontoolkit.org.