



Enhancing patient engagement and improving face to face consultations

Enhancing patient engagement

Digital communication can be used to reach out in a non-threatening way to patients who have disengaged from a service.

" We had someone recently who hadn't responded to any automatic DNA letters from clinic, so we just dropped her an email saying, 'not heard from you for a bit, is everything okay, can we do anything, do you need anything?' And she emailed us back so it was quite successful. "

Physiotherapist

Many patients are more likely to email or text to get in touch rather than telephone, particularly those considered hard to reach patients and those with communication difficulties.

" Unless patients know me very well, they don't ever call. So I think it does definitely help the relationship overall. "

Psychologist

The use of less formal and non-clinical language can help engagement.

Patients' feelings of control and empowerment can be enhanced so they actively manage their condition.

" It gives me more individuality because I'm able to know myself what to do and what not to do... if I call I can tell them that I don't feel well, this is what I'm doing, is this okay? And they will advise me on what to do. "

Patient

" There were a few emails where he described what his symptoms were and we asked him a few more questions. He responded to those. We gave him some advice about his medication, we told him we'd contact the GP to prescribe the medication and could he pick it up from the surgery. And then he said, 'oh I've done this, I'm feeling better.' "

Nurse Specialist

" They probably wouldn't call or turn up but they might email and say, 'I can't come or I haven't come', or 'I've run out of medicine', or 'can you organise this for me?' So it's that first rung on the ladder of self-management. We can then help them think about what they would like to do next. "

Psychologist

Patient activation can be enhanced through having confidence in their health professionals.

" It's knowing that I can contact her easily and that she's so nice about it all the time, she'll always send a really friendly reply. I think I have a lot more trust in her, I feel quite confident in her care. "

Patient

Improving face to face consultations

Patients with difficult issues to discuss value being able to do so by text before a face to face meeting.

" They can bring it up instead of you bringing it up. "

Patient

" If I have got something important that I need to try and talk about but I can't talk about it, I can just text it over to them. If they bring it up, I can just say that I don't want to talk about it but that is what happened. "

Patient

Building relationships with patients digitally can improve face to face appointments.

" If we can engage via text then they're more willing to engage with us in sessions. "

Mental Health Support Worker

If minor issues (such as ordering supplies) are dealt with between clinic appointments, then the health professional and patient can concentrate on the really important issues during the appointment.