

Expert Patients Programme

Benefits to GPs and Health Professionals

Whittington Health provides Expert Patients Programmes to people with long-term conditions (including Mental Health) and Carers across Islington and Haringey.

Patients who attend an Expert Patients Self-Management Programme:

- ✓ gain greater insight into their role in self-management
- ✓ gain more knowledge, confidence & skills to take charge of their health and implement lifestyle changes.

Whittington Health's EPP programme uses the Patient Activation Measure (PAM) to evaluate outcomes. Patient Activation measures the knowledge, skills and confidence a person has in managing their own health and care. Results consistently show an average increase in PAM scores of 11 points and an average increase of 1 PAM level (out of 4 possible levels). Each point increase in PAM scores correlates to a 2% decrease in hospitalisation and 2% increase in medication adherence¹.

Research published by the [Health Foundation](#) shows that supporting patients to manage their health conditions can reduce avoidable use of health services. An analysis of PAM responses collected from over 9,000 patients in Islington CCG found that, compared to those who felt least able (PAM level 1), those who felt most confident and able to manage their health condition (PAM level 4) had:

- 18% fewer general practice appointments;
- 32% fewer A&E attendances;
- 38% fewer emergency admissions;
- and were 32% less likely to attend A&E with a minor condition that could be better treated elsewhere.

Principles which inform the EPP:

- People with long-term conditions have similar concerns and problems
- People with health conditions must not only deal with the condition, but also with the impact this has on their lives and emotions.
- Lay people with long-term conditions, when given a detailed tutor's manual, can deliver as effectively as health professionals.
- The process or way the EPP is taught is as important, if not more important, than the subject. The emphasis needs to be on strategies to develop self-efficacy and activation, and on taking an enabling, facilitative approach.

EPP takes a bio-psycho-social approach. Self-Management skills which EPP supports participants to develop include:

- **solving problems** and responding to your condition as it gets better or worse;
- maintaining a **healthy lifestyle** through things like exercise and healthy eating;
- **managing symptoms**;
- **making decisions** about when to seek medical help and what treatments to try;
- working effectively with your **healthcare team**;
- finding and using **community resources**;
- **talking** about your illness with family and friends;
- **adapting** your social activities;
- using **medications safely and effectively** while minimising side-effects.

¹ <http://www.insigniahealth.com/products/pam-survey>

The process includes:

- Goal-setting and action-planning
- Feedback and problem-solving
- Role modelling
- Re-interpreting symptoms / addressing health beliefs

Our lay-tutors are trained local people living with health conditions who bring their lived experience, and act as role models, applying examples of what has worked for them. In Islington we run approximately 10 EPP courses per year including a specially adapted New Beginnings course for people with Mental Health conditions. In Haringey we deliver approximately 7 EPP courses per year including a Turkish course.

Quotes

"I have learned new skills and techniques to help improve or manage my conditions. They are very effective skills."

"It has given me an understanding of how important it is to communicate well with professionals who care for us in order to make the most of our appointments."

"I have more confidence now. I can talk to my doctor without him asking."

"Being with others who suffer similar conditions has been a life affirming experience, hearing other speak and realising there are common themes, difficulties, symptoms & feelings etc. as living with a long term mental health condition is a very isolating experience."

"Being involved in the Expert Patients Programme gave me my life back."