



## Characteristics of Successful Self-Management Support

By Kelly Kruse Nelles MS RN APRN-BC

Director, National RN Case Manager Certificate Program



Nurses in contemporary RNCM roles partner with patients and their family caregivers to help them manage their chronic conditions more successfully and use healthcare resources more appropriately. As RNCMs work to support patients in experiencing greater success related to the self-management of their chronic conditions, it is important to understand the tasks of self-management as well as the characteristics of successful self-management support.

### Successful self-management of a chronic condition includes assisting patients in:

- *Focusing on illness needs* by learning about their chronic condition(s) and taking responsibility for engaging in interventions to manage their related health care needs
- *Making use of resources* including health care, psychological, spiritual, social and environmental supports
- *Living with chronic illness* by processing emotions, adjusting to the illness and the “new normal”, making practical lifestyle modifications and striving for personal growth and satisfaction

### Patient Self-Management Tasks of Chronic Illness

To move towards successful self-management of their chronic condition, patients should be supported in accomplishing the following tasks of adjusting to a chronic illness or condition:

- Understanding the physical illness and management of related symptoms and pain
- Maintenance of roles and relationships
- Carrying out routine and self-care activities
- Managing emotional changes related to the adjustment to chronic illness as the “new normal”

### Characteristics of Successful Self-Management Support:

- Care provided is compassionate and patient-centered
- The whole care team is involved in planning, carrying out, and following up patient visits
- Patient visits focus on prevention and care management rather than critical or acute care
- Patients are involved in goal setting
- Education and skills training are customized to the patient. Teaching tools are appropriate for different cultures and health literacy levels

- Referrals are made to community-based resources that support self-management (i.e. nutrition, smoking cessation, exercise, etc.)
- Regular follow up is in place with patients (i.e. secured messaging, phone, in-person) that supports them taking good care of themselves

**Self-management interventions are most successful when**

- Patients participate in a collaborative process of care
- Both patient and the provider **share responsibility** for outcomes and decision making