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HEALTH COACHING

Taking coaching into
the healthcare arena

WHEN THE WALLS COME TUMBLING DOWN

Breaking down barriers
to communication

THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT

How coaching impacts
all areas of life

COACHING IN ALL PROFESSIONS

How coaching transforms
the way we lead & work

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THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT

How coaching impacts all areas of life

How are people outside of the coaching profession using coaching? When and how can they use coaching? How do we bring coaching skills into all areas of our lives? How do coaches use coaching in all areas of their lives? Who needs coaching as a skillset? Join us as we explore the butterfly effect of coaching, for coaches, non-coaches and in non-coaching situations.



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feature

THE HEALTH COACH WILL SEE YOU NOW

Taking coaching into
the healthcare arena

By Barbara B. Appelbaum, PCC, MBA, MAT



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There is a health crisis in our world. Although each country has a different type of healthcare system, most function like a sick care system. In the U.S., politicians claim to be trying to rectify the situation, but it just keeps getting worse. In other countries there are a variety of government-run programs that don't always offer the best solutions.

Everyone wants to control costs, expand access to care and improve quality of care, yet no system is perfect. In some you may wait an extended period in nonemergent situations for an appointment. In others you may pay more out of pocket expenses for personalized services. In the meantime, the average person may suffer. How can coaching play a role in alleviating this problem?

A SICK CARE SYSTEM

At an average doctor's appointment, the physician's schedule does not permit extended contact with their patient, usually only about 10-15 minutes, because many are incentivized to see a certain number of patients per hour. Much of their valuable patient-time is spent primarily on entering information into an electronic medical records system instead of physically looking at their patient. There is little to no follow-up regarding instructions given to a patient and no easy access to getting additional questions answered after an appointment.

This reactive type of care causes the patient undue confusion and stress while decreasing compliance on their part which can lead to an increase in illness. It can also cause the physician to struggle with excess stress and work burnout.

To clarify, allow me to use my own situation as an example. The Affordable Care Act in the U.S. was not adequately funded resulting in limited health insurance options available to me. On my previous

plan, I used to pay extra for a supplemental concierge doctor who offered a higher level of personalized care which I need due to preexisting conditions. Now no longer permitted by healthcare regulations to pay for that added level of care, I see a public hospital-employed primary care physician who spends less than 10 minutes in the room, rarely looks at me as he's focused on entering data in the computer, and asks me numerous questions to

a person from becoming a victim to the system, health coaching is making a positive impact teaching a patient to respond instead of react.

Consider how often a person goes to the doctor, has a complaint, is told what to do and then goes home confused because they don't understand what was said. Or how often a person may think it takes too much effort to comply with their doctor's instructions and they simply ignore them. Clearly, doctors no

To prevent a person from becoming a victim to the system, health coaching is making a positive impact teaching a patient to respond instead of react.

refresh his memory on my health issues because he's forgotten since my previous visit and did not have the opportunity to glance at my chart prior to my appointment.

My checkups are cursory at best, in my opinion, and I feel like no one is paying full attention to my health issues aside from myself. To stay well takes an extraordinary amount of patience and perseverance on my part. I am my own advocate. Unfortunately, the average person does not do what I do nor know how to. Out of frustration or inexperience they simply give up or stop caring, remaining stressed and unwell. Hence why I call it a sick care system. Personally, I find this very disturbing and feel we need to shift the paradigm to create a true health care system. How can this be done?

CREATING A PARADIGM SHIFT

As a coach, you know about transforming the way people think, feel and act. Therefore, what about transforming how a person regards their own health care? To prevent

longer have the time to spend with each patient, ensuring they do as they are told or comply with taking prescribed medication. However, with the advent of health coaches, patients can now have accountability partners by their side to help them achieve their goals.

Health coaches take a more holistic approach covering all aspects of their client's needs, spending as much time as necessary with each individual. This fosters a proactive attitude, supporting a true health care model. As a supportive mentor and wellness authority, a health coach can:

- ♥ Create individualized programs by incorporating a holistic approach to nutrition, fitness and spirituality to meet their client's needs.
- ♥ Partner with the client's physician to create a team approach, acting as an accountability partner in follow up to doctor's prescriptions and lifestyle recommendations



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setting realistic goals and helping them create a SMART plan to achieve those goals.

♥ Teach patients how to track their medical information such as important numbers like blood pressure and cholesterol, family history, test results, allergies and medications as well as advocate on their behalf when needed.

By conveying the skills and empathy of a health coach into a patient's life, stress and confusion are diminished, compliance and overall wellness increase. The patient becomes empowered and confident to live well. It's the well-known adage of instead of providing a fish for a hungry person to eat for one day, you teach the person how to fish for themselves so they can eat for a lifetime. You as the health coach provide the means for the patient to take control of their own health and life; increasing their gratification and engagement.

In turn, this also decreases the amount of stress put on the physician. They no longer worry as

to whether a patient is compliant or not and see more positive results at each appointment resulting in greater job satisfaction. Normally focused on their limitations set forth by guidelines, a health coach can help a physician remember the underlying reasons of why they chose the profession of medicine and get back some of the joy missing in their career. They can learn to avoid burnout and stress while achieving balance, joy and success.

Sometimes, the healer needs to be healed as much, if not more so, than the patient.

IS HEALTH COACHING RIGHT FOR YOU?

According to Duke University, "... Health coaching empowers clients to make lasting behavior changes that are the foundation for a lifetime of health and well-being... (a health coach) helps support their clients in discovering ways to successfully implement healthy lifestyle behaviors across these various dimensions into their unique lives." There are several

ICF-approved programs that offer rigorous curricula that not only meet International Coach Federation standards but prepare you to meet the unique challenges presented by our sick care system for both the patient and physician. You do not have to have a background in healthcare, medicine or nutrition. It helps, of course, but isn't necessary. All you need is passion. Passion to help others live their healthiest lives regardless of chronic or other ailments.

In conclusion, healthcare may seem outside the parameters of coaching, but given the current 'sick care' climate, it makes all the sense in the world. Coaches are accountability partners, advocates and champions for their clients. Patients used to look to their physician for this and now can look to a health coach. And for the forward-thinking physicians out there, many are teaming with health coaches to enrich their practices to bring patient-centered care to the forefront instead of drowning in the muck of healthcare regulations. •