Long COVID Communication Guide

Shared Decision-Making Guide for Long COVID providers

Shared decision making (SDM) is a collaborative process in which patients, clinicians and Community Health Workers (CHWs) work together to make healthcare decisions informed by evidence, the care team's knowledge and experience, and the patient's values, goals, preferences, and circumstances. Family members and caregivers also play an important role in SDM. SDM can be helpful in management of Long COVID as it can validate complex and often overlooked symptoms.

Long COVID is "an infection-associated chronic condition (IACC) that occurs after SARSCoV-2 infection and is present for at least 3 months as a continuous, relapsing and remitting, or progressive disease state that affects one or more organ systems." This definition is intentionally broad and inclusive to accurately represent the range of possible presentations of Long COVID.

S: Seek their participation

- Understand your patient's symptoms and the impact on their life (physical, emotional, relational). Encourage storytelling and specific examples/references.
- Ask open-ended questions
- Discuss symptom tracking methods. Consider pen and paper or app options.

Washington State Department of HEALTH

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H: Help them explore ways to manage symptoms

- **Emotional and social support:** discuss mental health considerations and support systems
- **Disability and work accommodations:** what documentation does the person need, depending on the impact their symptoms have on their day-to-day life.
- **Symptom management:** Consider the 4 Ps (Pacing, Prioritizing, Planning and Positioning)
- Referral to other specialties depending on symptoms

A: Assess their values and preferences

- Work to understand how Long COVID affects your patient's life – how to prioritize their treatments and tests based on their preferences.
- Consider the role that community and culture play in their priorities.

R: Reach a decision together

- Create a care plan that is patient centered and addresses their priorities.
- Set clear goals that can be measured

E: Evaluate their decision

- Ensure regular follow up with the patient to monitor progress – this includes follow up with specialty care.
- Adjust the care plan and goals as needed and based on patient experience/feedback.
- Celebrate the patient's wins and progress!