

# Goal Training Enablement Approach

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# 1. Enablement Approach

Health care is moving away from the traditional approach of the health care provider taking responsibility for the patient's treatment plan and 'treating' the patient, of clinicians being protective of their care planning, with a lack of communication between teams and a duplication of services<sup>1</sup>. Enablement, as an approach, is gaining increasing prominence in the health care sector. The origins of the concept of enablement go back to the concept of 'empowerment' (potere: Latin for 'to be able', em: 'cause to be or provide with').

Studies have shown that interventions supporting the development of individual empowerment are associated with more effective decision making, better handling of the complications of disease and the adoption of healthier behaviours<sup>2</sup>. In 2010, The NSW Department of Family and Community Services (Ageing, Disability and Home Care) began *The Better Practice Project*. Four projects were funded to implement an enabling approach for people who were eligible for Home and Community Care services<sup>3</sup>. Participants recorded higher average scores for wellbeing and functional ability on exit that they had on entry.

So what is an enablement approach? It is an intervention in which the health care provider recognises, promotes and enhances the patients' ability to control their health and life<sup>4</sup>.

A concept analysis of enablement in the healthcare context identified six (6) main attributes<sup>2</sup>:

1. Contribution to the therapeutic relationship: active listening, good communication, collaboration, continuity, egalitarian relationship
2. Consideration of the person as a whole: (bio-psycho-social), health condition, psychological condition, life context (eg family, work, finances), knowledge and understanding of the situation (health literacy), opinions, feelings, expectations
3. Facilitation of learning: exchange of information, education, individualised teaching
4. Valorization (give or ascribe value or validity to) of the person's strengths (expertise): reinforcement of the skills and competence, guidance to the patient in understanding his/her situation
5. Person's implication and support to decision making
6. Broadening of the possibilities: positive vision of the future, change in the self-image, process of transformation of thoughts, hope, finding a meaning to events/life

An enablement approach aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- patient empowerment
- staff acting as ‘enablers’
- increased teamwork and increased use of clinician skills and experience
- improved continuity of care
- improved communication between teams.

Table 2 compares the traditional approach to health care and an enablement approach.

Traditional Approach	Enablement Approach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Patient dependency</u> - health professional takes responsibility for patient’s treatment plan</li> <li>• <u>Staff as doers/fixers</u> - work is done when the patient is treated</li> <li>• <u>Individual assessment / care planning</u> - protective of discipline / practice</li> <li>• <u>Lack of continuity</u> - leading to duplication</li> <li>• <u>Lack of communication</u> between teams</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Patient empowerment</u> - aim to maximise self-care at all levels</li> <li>• <u>Staff as enablers</u> - work is done once the patient is enabled</li> <li>• <u>Teamwork</u> - increased use of skills / experience within teams</li> <li>• <u>Continuity of care</u> - seamless transfer across the service</li> <li>• <u>Improved communication</u> between teams</li> </ul>

**Table 1 The traditional approach and an enablement approach to health care**

What does an enablement approach look like in practice<sup>5</sup>?

- the focus is on what each patient can do and wants to be able to do, not just on what they are unable to do at present. Understanding an individual’s past abilities is as important as knowing about present disabilities
- each patient is actively involved in setting and achieving goals that are important and meaningful to them
- health care providers work collaboratively with each patient, the patient’s carer, social networks and other providers, tapping into both formal and informal supports
- the focus is on the achievement of each patient's goals
- each patient’s goals are regularly reviewed
- health care providers work with patients to reduce unnecessary service use – improving their functional independence in ways defined as important by them.

## Summary: Enablement Approach

- ❖ An enablement approach is an intervention in which the health care provider recognises, promotes and enhances the patients' ability to control their health and life
  
- ❖ It aims to achieve:
  - patient empowerment
  - staff acting as 'enablers'
  - increased teamwork and increased use of clinician skills and experience
  - improved continuity of care
  - improved communication between teams.

## References

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