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Initiating DSMES Referrals at Critical Time 3—When New Complicating Factors Influence Self-Management

A Guide for Communicating with Patients and Implementing Team Care

During routine medical care, the provider may identify factors that influence treatment and the associated self-management plan. These factors may include the patient's ability to manage and cope with diabetes complications, other health conditions, medications, physical limitations, emotional needs and basic living needs. The identification of diabetes complications or other patient factors that may influence self-management should be considered a critical indicator for diabetes education that requires immediate attention and adequate resources.

Providers should initiate a referral to and facilitate participation in diabetes self-management education and support (DSMES) services at the four critical times 1) at diagnosis, 2) annually and/or when not meeting treatment targets, 3) when complicating factors develop and 4) when transitions in life and care occur.

This job aid focuses on *Critical Time 3—When Complicating Factors Develop* and provides strategies for communicating with patients and implementing a team care approach during this critical time.



Key Factors to Consider for Patient Discussions



Mental Health

Diabetes-related distress has a greater impact on behavioral and metabolic outcomes than does depression. It is responsive to intervention, including DSMES-focused interventions and family support. However, additional mental health resources are generally required to address severe diabetes-related distress, clinical depression and anxiety. It is important to recognize the psychological issues related to diabetes and prescribe treatment as appropriate.



Basic Needs

Social factors, including difficulty paying for food, medications, monitoring and other supplies, medical care, housing or utilities, negatively affect metabolic control and increase resource use. When basic living needs are not met, diabetes self-management becomes increasingly difficult. Education staff can address such issues, provide information about available resources and collaborate with the patient to create a self-management plan that reflects these challenges. If complicating factors are present during initial education or a maintenance session, the DSMES educators can either directly address these factors or arrange for additional resources.



Managing Limitations

Diabetes-related health conditions can cause physical limitations, such as visual impairment, dexterity issues and physical activity restrictions. Diabetes educators can help patients to manage limitations through education and various support resources. For example, educators can help patients to access large-print or talking glucose meters that benefit those with visual impairments and specialized aids for insulin users that can help those with visual and/or dexterity limitations.

Team Care

Topics and Strategies for Implementing an Effective Team Care Approach

The diagnosis of additional health conditions and the potential need for additional medications can complicate self-management for the patient. Diabetes education can address the integration of multiple medical conditions into overall care with a focus on maintaining or appropriately adjusting medication, eating plan and physical activity levels to maximize outcomes and quality of life.

Action Steps

Here are the action steps for providers, educators and specialists for DSMES during this critical time:

Primary Care Provider/Endocrinologist/Clinical Care Team's Role in Diabetes Education	Diabetes Care and Education Specialist's Role in Diabetes Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Identify presence of factors that inhibit or facilitate achievement of treatment targets and personal goals.<input type="checkbox"/> Discuss impact of complications and successes with treatment and self-management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Provide support for the provision of self-management skills in an effort to delay progression of the disease and prevent new complications.<input type="checkbox"/> Provide/refer for emotional support for diabetes-related distress and depression.<input type="checkbox"/> Develop and support personal strategies for behavioral change and healthy coping.<input type="checkbox"/> Develop personal strategies to accommodate sensory or physical limitation(s), adapt to new self-management demands and promote health and behavior change.

Remember: Complicating factors may arise at any time; providers should be prepared to promptly refer patients who develop complications or other issues for diabetes education and ongoing support.

References

- <https://care.diabetesjournals.org/content/43/7/1636>
- https://www.diabeteseducator.org/docs/default-source/practice/practice-resources/position-statements/dsme_joint_position_statement_2015.pdf?sfvrsn=0