

Community-Led Approaches - Having Good Conversations

This resource forms part of a series by Healthcare Improvement Scotland on community-led approaches.

Community-led approaches are an approach to the design and coordination of the way services operate. They emphasise relational care and support centred on outcomes – finding out what really matters to people and bringing in the care and support from across the system. Community-led approaches better meet people's needs in the community, and by doing so reduce the need for more downstream services. For more information on this series or community-led approaches please contact his.transformationalsystemchange@nhs.scot.

There are four key components to community-led approaches:

- ensuring community-based access
- **support driven by good conversations between services and those they are supporting (covered in this resource)**
- co-ordinated service response that enables people to receive holistic support without facing siloed services
- maintained connections between services and those they are supporting to ensure someone has a consistent relationship that enables better access to support

1 What are Good Conversations?

These conversations are about building a connection with people. They allow space for individuals and professionals to:

- share what matters to them
- explore other things they might want help with

These conversations are the first contact in community hubs. They help identify which services can best support an individual and how.

The focus is on understanding a person's overall needs. It is not about deciding which condition pathway to refer them to. That part can come later.

Person-centred conversations have become a core part of all care and support provided by services. However, in the context of community-led approaches there needs to be a shift in how we think about these conversations. This shift changes our focus from eligibility and assessment to what truly matters. It highlights how services can work together to support positive outcomes.

This shift is articulated in the table below

From	To
Conversations to assess against service eligibility criteria.	Conversations to understand a wide range of needs.
Set questions/assessments designed to extract information from people.	Exploratory questions led by curiosity about what matters to people and how their health is impacting their wellbeing.
Conversations that seek to understand how a single service can support an individual.	Conversations that seek to understand how to best formulate a whole system response across a range of services.
Conversations centred on specific health outcomes.	Conversations centred on personal goals.

The key change is collaboration - This needs to be understood as a clear arrangement and understanding of roles between services. Supported through joint care plans, regular discussions and an explicit expression of how to work together to make sure that the different types of support are mutually beneficial.

2 The components of a 'good conversation'

2.1 Person having the conversation represents the whole system - Community-led approaches are about collaboration. A key role of a good conversation is to understand how the strengths and roles of different services can work together to support an individual. The staff member having the conversation needs to understand how lots of different services support people, not just their own. This also includes knowledge of services outside their sector/specialism.

Example

Talking Points (East Renfrewshire health and social care partnership) - The Talking Points Partnership in East Renfrewshire has 50 organisations involved. These include both statutory and non-statutory services. At their community hubs, the Talking Points brand fosters a culture of partnership. The Talking Points Partnership offers staff a clear structure for working together. This supports conversations that focus on partnership. This includes:

- a Talking Points Partnership Co-ordinator to build the partnership and give structure to networking
- regular meetings of partners to get to know each other, share insights and coordinate activity
- networking opportunities help organisations discuss ways to collaborate and offer combined support

Learning from this approach has included

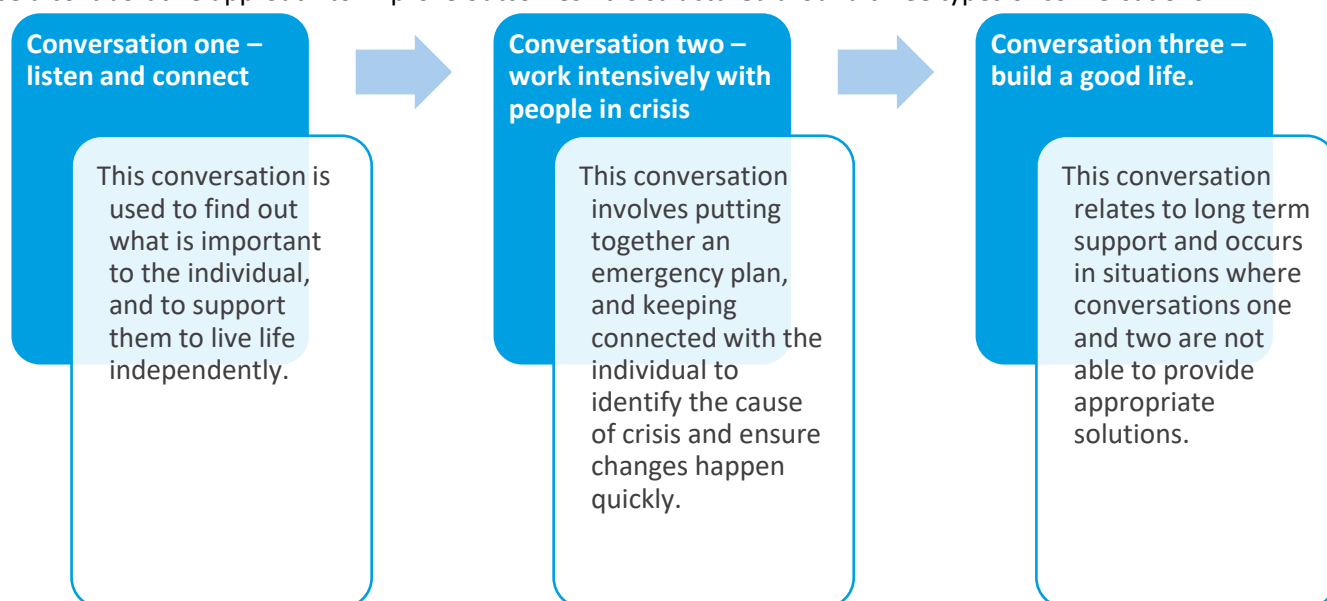
- having a structured partnership and building the knowledge of how services work together means that there is an ongoing problem-solving approach. This includes outside of community hubs and that first point of contact
- bringing the learning together from a wide range of partners allows the development of a richer picture of population needs and potential gaps in services.

"If you turn up from the money advice team, you're not from money advice anymore – you're from Team Talking Points..."

2.2 Different conversations at different points - Having a structure for a series of conversations at different points can ensure there is a blend of understanding the whole individual, providing an immediate response and establishing longer term support.

Example

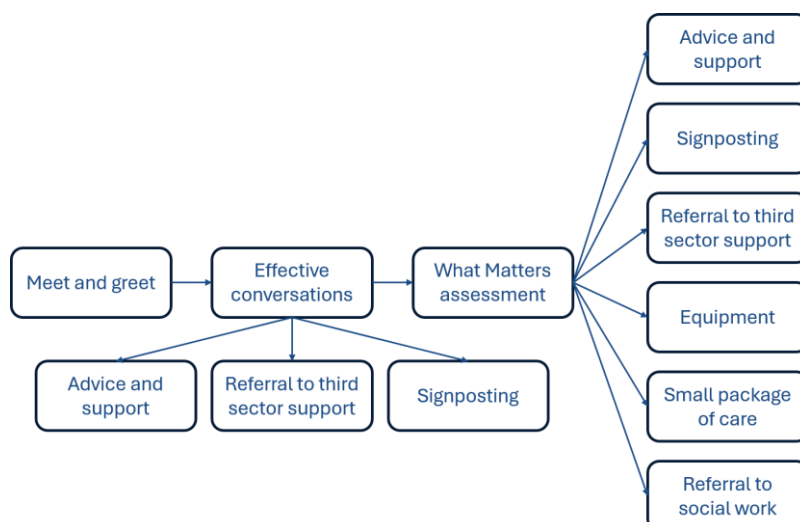
Three Conversations (Edinburgh health and social care partnership) Edinburgh health and social care partnership began using the **Three Conversations** model in April 2019 as one part of an ambitious transformation programme to achieve the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan objectives (2019-22). This approach, developed by Partners for Change, supports staff to have open and interested conversations with people who need support and to use a collaborative approach to improve outcomes. It is structured around three types of conversations:



2.3 Balancing responses - To ensure that good conversations feel meaningful to people there should be a range of options for immediate support. This can be in the form of guidance and advice, a referral to a third sector organisation the person can contact on the same day, or more formalised assessments that can immediately provide things like small packages of care or equipment. This gives people trust and confidence in the process and moves away from the culture of triage down particular pathways as well as enabling staff to address needs quickly.

Example

What Matters Hubs (Scottish Borders health and social care partnership) - What Matters Hawick have a clear process for enabling immediate responses while also ensuring the right support is provided. This is a two-step process where an initial ‘good conversation’ builds the relationship and helps understand what a person is needing support with and how the people at the hub can help. There is also the option to have a ‘What Matters to You Assessment’ for higher levels of need.



The effective conversation identifies an individual's needs and how they will be helped in the hub. If signposting only is required, then this can be done without completing any assessment forms. The 'What Matters to You Assessment' is a short, four-page write up of the good conversation. This has been developed for the hub and is completed if statutory support is required. This includes:

- what matters to you?
- what is working in your life right now? what is not working?
- what supports do you have in place and what are your strengths?

The 'What Matters to You Assessment' is input to the social care IT system. Information can then therefore be pulled through when a full social work assessment is required.

3 What enables 'good conversations' to work

3.1 Strong leadership - Support from Edinburgh health and social care partnership senior leadership was invaluable in promoting the overall vision at the outset of this work. Leaders were also involved in regular 'making it happen' meetings, which helped to facilitate change and address issues as they came up.

3.2 Linking in local partners - Involving partner organisations in the planning of Three Conversations work promoted collaborative working early on. Partner organisations included the Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations' Council (EVOC).

3.3 Taking time to understand the local context - Staff at innovation sites were encouraged to take time early on to explore their local area and interact with members of the community.

3.4 Learning culture - Staff take the time to reflect on new ways of working with people and each other. Developing an understanding of 'what works' is important in building new collaborative approaches. There is also learning at a planning level, gathering insights and intelligence about population health needs, and potential gaps in available support.