

Support patient autonomy

Transcript

Dr Shani Macaulay

Supporting patient autonomy is a core part of helping a patient to change unwanted behaviours. Edward Deci founded the Self Determination Theory, and he describes the importance of the person's own intrinsic motivations in changing behaviours. The ability for a person to determine the course of their own lives is an essential part of lasting behavioural change.

Supporting patient autonomy is also a key factor in motivational interviewing. To be truly patient centred, the role of the GP is to walk beside the patient and to engage them in the therapeutic alliance. To assist the patient in evoking their own motivations for change, to help focus the patient's agenda on their own values and attitudes and to help the patient to come up with their own plan and strategies for change. We do this using smart goals. Supporting the patient's autonomy allows the person to feel more in control and to instil confidence in their ability to change.

People who use alcohol and other drugs often have a range of factors that intersect that have led them to where they are today. There are higher rates of trauma, poorer social determinants of health as well as higher rates of stigma and feeling judged by society and the medical community. Patients can feel disempowered and unable to change and it's the clinician's goal to instil a sense of hope.

The acronym CHIME can assist GPs to help foster a patient's autonomy and to focus the patient's agenda and motivations for change. CHIME stands for connectedness, hope and optimism about the future, the patient's own identity and how they see themselves, their meaning in life and empowerment.