

Health And Well-Being

The Transformative Value of Health Coaching

(NAPS)—If you've ever tried to make a healthy lifestyle change, you may have found that your initial excitement fades quickly, and you return to your old habits. Well, you're not alone.

In fact, going into this new year, more and more health plans are including a helpful program benefit that helps members transform their own health and stick to new behaviors—health coaching.

Health coaching is a dynamic and impactful approach to health care. It has the potential to change lives in numerous positive ways. The collaborative partnership between a trained health coach and a health plan member is rooted in several key principles and strategies including personalized guidance, behavior change, and empowerment. Some of the key aspects of coaching include enhancing well-being, learning, social support, instruction, and the development of improved habits.

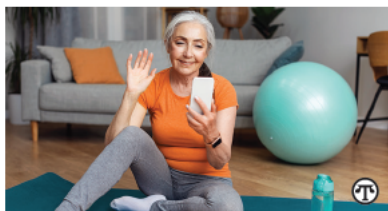
“The reason I love coaching so much—and why I say it's transformative—is because it is so rare for someone to come into a space where the focus is completely on them, where a coach wants to know about their hopes, empathizes with their struggles, and knows how to help them find their way,” said Emily Adams, a national board-certified health and wellness coach, who manages coach performance at American Specialty Health (ASH).

While promoting health through lifestyle changes is nothing new, it was only in the past 30 years that health coaching has become a widely accepted activity, one that's designed to help people convert their wellness goals into effective actions.

Today, with refined coaching processes and behavior-change techniques, an entire industry has evolved to empower a lot more individuals to live healthier. And in this post-pandemic era, virtual health coaching and well-being programs are burgeoning in modern health care.

Physical health is not the only thing that health coaches address. They recognize the connection between fitness, mental health, and emotional well-being.

“Some people start working with a coach thinking they want help with their diet but realize that the reason they are eating poorly is because they don't have tools to cope with stress,” Adams said. “Many are surprised when they start to recognize their own strengths, improve their confidence, and start to take ownership of their thoughts—recognizing how they are working for and against their goals.”



A little help from a good coach can make a big difference in your health and happiness.

Adams works with well-being coaches in the Silver&Fit[®] Healthy Aging & Exercise program to ensure quality member support through coach training and oversight. Silver&Fit members can be paired with certified health coaches to work on their fitness, nutrition, and lifestyle goals during scheduled phone or video sessions.

“We've had members come into the program completely defeated and unsure if they will ever be able to improve their health,” Adams said. “We've also had members who are very close to reaching their health goals and just need a little extra support to get there.”

Health coaching holds immense potential for health plan members. According to Adams, the benefits a member might gain from working with a health coach could include:

- Clarity about their hopes, values, and goals
- Confidence in themselves, their strengths, and their abilities and how to advocate for themselves and their health
- Tools for self-accountability, positive habit forming, and proactively managing stress
- Knowing how to break big changes into small, manageable steps
- Awareness of thought barriers and how to overcome them
- Learning how to find what they need and use their resources

“As coaches, we get to walk alongside people as they grow, learn, discover, and utilize their strengths to be the healthiest versions of themselves,” said Adams.

It's important that your health plan supports your long-term health and well-being. If you want to make healthy lifestyle changes in the coming year, check with your health plan on coaching program benefits. And if you find you have this benefit, make the most of it. The transformative power of working with a coach can have a lasting impact and help you take control of your health and maintain your well-being.