

Making Every Contact Count (MECC): Chat to Change Train the Trainer: Additional Information for Managers

FREE Training for your Workforce

What is Making Every Contact Count? A Chat to Change

Making Every Contact Count (MECC) is the opportunistic delivery of consistent and concise healthy lifestyle information via brief or very brief behaviour change interventions, enabling individuals to engage in conversations about their health.

MECC provides an opportunity to discuss health and wellbeing lifestyle pathways which can support and enable behaviour change for key risk factors including smoking, alcohol, healthy weight, physical activity and mental health and may link to local social prescribing offers.

Why are we doing this?

Many long-term diseases affecting our population are closely linked to known behavioural risk factors, with 40% of the UK's disability adjusted life years lost being attributable to tobacco, hypertension, alcohol, being overweight or being physically inactive.

Our public and community services provide thousands of opportunities every day to work with and support people in living the best lives they can and in accessing the services and help they need to do this.

As a result, the Lancashire and South Cumbria Prevention and Population Health Board endorsed MECC as a priority deliverable in June 2018 and a multi-agency Steering Group was established.

“For all of us in Lancashire and South Cumbria to be more informed, motivated and empowered to maintain and improve our own health and wellbeing through delivery of consistent health messages and support to access services”.

What are the benefits for your staff and service?

Frontline staff and volunteers routinely have thousands of day-to-day contacts each year with service users, and patients and MECC is about using these to empower and support everyone - including staff themselves - to make healthier choices to achieve positive health outcomes.

Implementing Making Every Contact Count will require training and up-skilling of staff with the knowledge, skills and resources necessary to support these lifestyle behaviour changes.

The first step in embedding Making Every Contact Count will be to engage staff in comprehensive and ongoing training opportunities, underpinned by reliable resources and a communication campaign.

Trained staff will then be further resourced to cascade their acquired knowledge and skills across their own services and organisations. Supporting whole workforce development in this way can help to offset stressful work situations, with the potential benefit of reducing sickness absences - especially as staff themselves are motivated to make behaviour and lifestyle changes of their own!

Trained staff will also receive ongoing benefits which include resources, campaign materials, community of practice membership for further face to face, e-learning and webinars.

This training aligns with Person Centred models of Personalised Care and Social Prescribing models whilst ensuring the public has access to agreed, informed and evidence-based health and well-being advice and information.

The Aim of MECC Chat to Change Training Sessions

'To support staff to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to offer public health and wellbeing messages, via very brief interventions, to both service users and colleagues during the course of their day-to-day work.'

Objectives and benefits of the training:

By the end of the module participants will have:

1. Described the context and rationale for MECC within their role and its positive health impact on individuals, services and local populations.
2. Explained the public health messages and discussed how small yet significant changes can support people to better health.
3. Gained confidence in having the conversation and from the reliability of the resources to support them.
4. Practiced using the three A's (Ask, Assist, Act) framework and a person-centred approach to deliver a brief intervention.
5. Considered how they might embed MECC within their role, utilising the branding and material assets that form the MECC Communications Campaign.
6. Identified further opportunities to promote and cascade the MECC approach throughout their organisation.
7. Acquired the necessary additional teaching / training skills to aid them in promoting and cascading their skills and knowledge to colleagues.
8. Used and understood the MECCLink online resource and how it underpins brief and very brief interventions: www.MECCLink.co.uk/lancashire-and-south-cumbria
9. Gained an understanding of how MECC aligns with related initiatives e.g., social prescribing.

There is a requirement for those attending the course to deliver a minimum of one MECC training session every eight weeks to their organisation/ services or community/ third sector organisations.

Participants will need the support and commitment of their managers to enable them to attend. As places are limited, please take advantage of this opportunity to ensure representation from a range of organisations and communities across Lancashire and South Cumbria.