



Gwneud i bob cyswllt gyfrif
Making every contact count

Information Booklet

Introduction

This is a summary description of the Making Every Contact Count (MECC) approach and briefly outlines the **What, Why, Who** and **How** of adopting the approach within an organisation. The information provided below will enable senior leaders, managers and staff members to understand more about MECC and how the approach may fit within their organisation.

1. What is Making Every Contact Count (MECC)?

- Making Every Contact Count (MECC) is an approach that encourages and empowers those working within the health sector and beyond, to use every appropriate opportunity to promote healthy lifestyle choices through brief advice and brief intervention and to signpost to relevant community based and healthcare services
- MECC is a tool that embeds the systematic promoting of the benefits of healthy lifestyle into everyday practice.
- MECC encourages the workforce to recognise the role they have in promoting healthy lifestyles, supporting behaviour change and contributing to reducing the risk of illness.

What MECC is not

- Adding another job to already busy working days
- Staff becoming specialists or experts in certain lifestyle topics



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- Staff becoming counsellors or providing ongoing support
- Staff telling somebody what to do or how to live their life

2. Why should we MECC?

- Lifestyle factors such as smoking, alcohol, poor diet and reduced physical activity are some of the biggest contributors to health inequalities. Many preventable deaths and illnesses such as heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and some cancers could be avoided by making healthier lifestyle choices.
- Evidence has shown that offering appropriate person centred brief advice or brief intervention at key points in people's lives can help them to change their behaviour and stay healthy. It is a technique that can be used for a range of behaviours.

There are many benefits to taking a MECC approach:

- **Individual and population benefits** – providing advice and behaviour support at every appropriate contact will contribute to a reduction in risk factors for the diseases that are the biggest killers and will encourage people to take responsibility for their health and wellbeing
- **Financial benefits** – evidence shows that brief interventions on healthy living are cost effective.
- **Quality benefits** – implementing MECC can make services more accessible and patient focussed



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- **Organisational benefits** – implementing MECC can support an organisation to meet its core responsibilities towards improving the health and wellbeing of the local population.

3. Who is MECC for and who can do it?

- MECC is for the individuals, groups and communities you serve
- MECC is for organisations wishing to support the public and staff to improve their health and wellbeing
- MECC can be done by anyone who comes into contact with people who have opportunity to have a conversation about health and wellbeing
- MECC can be done by anyone working in any sector such as health, social care, community and voluntary sectors

4. How is MECC implemented?

Training itself does not deliver a successful MECC programme but forms part of a wider programme of system leadership, organisational and staff readiness and public awareness. Successful implementation of MECC is achieved through organisations taking ownership for the approach, delivering training within their setting and by building in future sustainability and encouraging health promotion activity alongside service delivery.

An implementation guide is provided for this section and is supported by a number of tools and resources such as:

- An e-learning package at level 1
- A face to face training package at level 2



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- An evaluation framework

Organisations will be expected to:

- Identify suitable people to lead/champion the MECC approach
- Identify suitable trainers who can cascade the training element to colleagues within the appropriate areas of the organisation
- Work towards implementing the action plan outlined within the toolkit

The Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board Public Health Team:

- Will share knowledge and skills with the trainers to enable them to be confident and competent MECC trainers through a train the trainer approach
- Provide a guide with supporting tools for guidance, along with an action plan to implement the programme
- Provide Public Health support at key points throughout the process
- Will not provide any direct training