

[Clinician Perspectives on Working With Health Coaches:](#)

[A Mixed Methods Approach.](#) Dubé, et al. *Families, Systems, & Health*. 2015.

This study offers an initial glimpse into clinicians' opinions and perspectives on collaborating with health coaches in a primary care setting. Evidence for the benefits of health coaching for health outcomes is accumulating; this study adds clinicians' perspectives (physicians and nurse practitioners) about the role and contributions of health coaches to patient care.

Health coaching was defined as “self-management support, navigational support of clinic and community recourses, medication reconciliation, and other patient-centered support.” The coaches developed on-going relationships with the patients – they met with them before the visit with the clinician, stayed during the visit, discussed issues afterwards, and kept in touch with the patients between visits. After the patients had been part of the program for at least 5 months, the researchers asked clinicians what were their options about patient care in the cases when health coaches were included, compared to when they were not.

Through survey and interviews, clinicians shared that health coaches improved their work experience. They stated that the visits with patients who had been coached were less demanding and more time had opened up to address other issues during the visit. Physicians felt that they were able to address additional questions from patients during the visit, since many on-going issues had been clarified during coaching. They also felt that the coaches were able to closely connect with the patients and talk about more personal issues; the coaching had improved patient self-management skills, which would lead to improvements in health. Interestingly, coaching had also indirectly improved the communication between the clinician and the patients; and coaching was helping patients navigate the healthcare system.

Coaching can enhance relationships in primary care and other medical settings as well as indirectly improving the way physicians and patients communicate.

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