

# MECC – an approach to help you

In your day to day job, you will have opportunities to talk to people about many things that impact their health and wellbeing, often with knock-on effects on their employability.

You could find yourself talking to the person about a lifestyle behaviour (like smoking, alcohol, weight, physical activity and so on). But you could also be drawn into conversations about wider things, like money worries, mental health, or loneliness.

Making Every Contact Count (MECC) is about using these opportunities to good effect – e.g., offering advice and/or signposting people to other services and supports that will help them.

MECC is an approach that helps you to have good conversations (about things that can often come up unexpectedly) and generally assist your clients to be in more control of their own health and wellbeing. Hopefully, this will put many in a stronger position to progress their employability prospects.

## MECC conversation skills

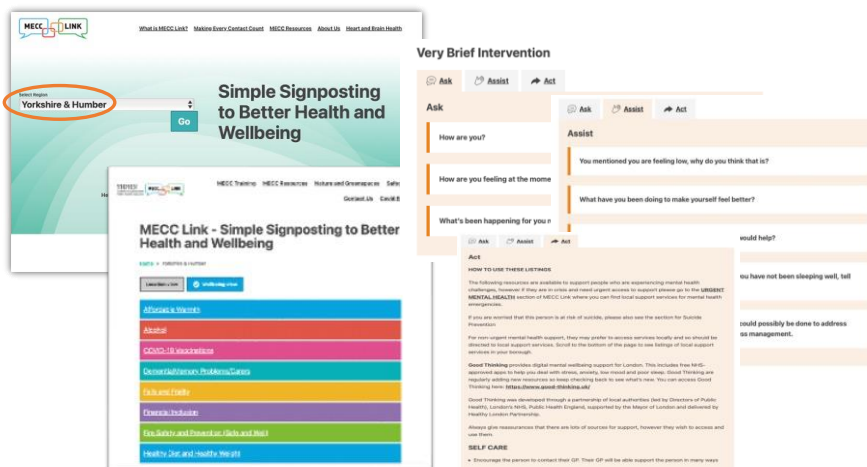
In the training, we covered a range of skills that support good conversations. Here are some important tips to remember and work on:

- Look out for opportunities to have a chat - be open and interested in what your client is experiencing
- Help them to tell their story - this puts you in a stronger position to know how you might be able to assist
- Ask questions, listen so you can understand, be encouraging and affirmative, play back what you are hearing (this shows you are listening and helps you check if you have understood correctly) – these skills all help towards a good conversation
- Ask permission to ask questions and to offer advice or information. And, once you provided information, ask your client what they have understood by it
- Where appropriate, help your client to set goals and make a plan for what they intend to do next – try and use the conversation to move things on, even just a small step (you may be able to pick things up again later)
- Think about following the 3As model for your conversation. This helps you structure and flow the chat. You can use MECC conversation skills across each of the 3 stages – Ask-Assist-Act (see below)



## Resources to draw on

In addition to good conversation skills, resources that allow you to access information on the topics you may be speaking about, and where to point people for further help will support you to MECC. Here are three resources (you may know of others) that you should be aware of.



**MECC Link** – In Yorkshire and Humber, this resource provides information on a wide range of topics you find yourself chatting about. The content is structured by the 3As. It gives you indicative questions to ASK, information that you can use to ASSIST, and contact information about where to signpost to when you help your client to ACT. You can easily access MECC Link on your smart device or laptop at [www.mecclink.co.uk](http://www.mecclink.co.uk)

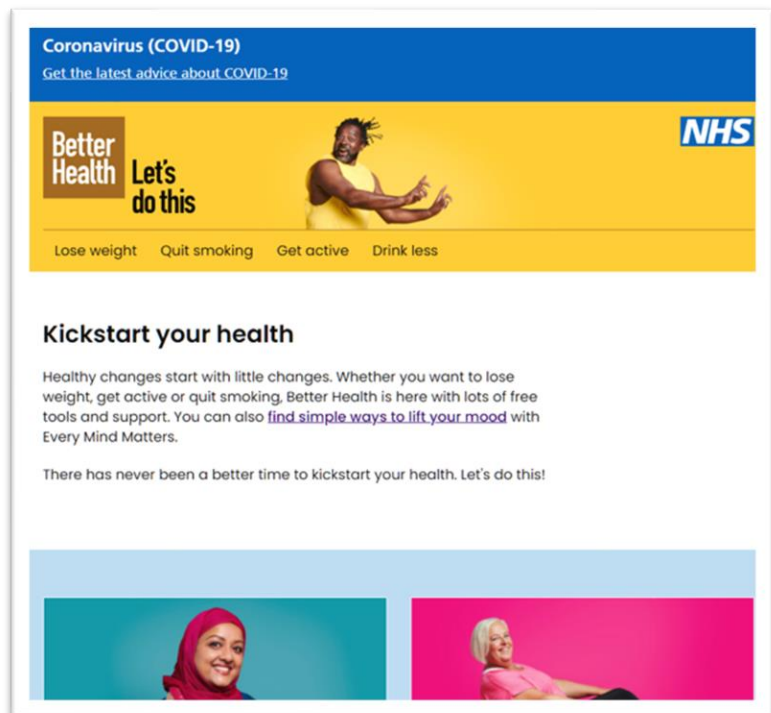
**Your local Council's website** – Do check out your Council's website. It will have a lot of useful information that you can draw on when speaking to clients about a wide range of things.

West Yorkshire	South Yorkshire	North Yorkshire	Humber
<a href="#">Bradford</a> <a href="#">Calderdale</a> <a href="#">Kirklees</a> <a href="#">Leeds</a> <a href="#">Wakefield</a>	<a href="#">Barnsley</a> <a href="#">Doncaster</a> <a href="#">Rotherham</a> <a href="#">Sheffield</a>	<a href="#">North Yorkshire</a>	<a href="#">Hull</a> <a href="#">North Lincs</a> <a href="#">NE Lincs</a>

### NHS Better Health

If you find yourself talking to a client about a lifestyle issue, this is another useful resource - [www.nhs.uk/better-health](http://www.nhs.uk/better-health). It can help you support the person to make changes to a range of lifestyle behaviours that they may be worried about. The site has a range of helpful Apps and videos that your clients can easily access.

Do take some time to get familiar with some key resources that will help you to help your clients. Knowing that there are good resources available that you can turn to should also build your confidence to take the opportunities that present themselves to open up helpful conversations with your clients that will support their health and wellbeing.



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