

Patient Activation Measure (PAM®) Levels

Descriptions, personas and support guidance



Patient activation is comprised of three domains that build upon one another:
Knowledge, Skills and Confidence

Level 1

DISENGAGED AND OVERWHELMED

“My doctor is in charge of my health.”

Individuals are passive and lack confidence. Knowledge is low, goal-orientation is weak and adherence is poor.

Healthcare utilisation:

VERY HIGH emergency department (ED) and A&E use

VERY HIGH risk of avoidable ambulatory care sensitive (ACS) utilisation

VERY HIGH risk of readmission

VERY HIGH risk of missing appointments

VERY LOW use of preventive care and clinical screenings

Domain	These individuals may:	How to support them:
KNOWLEDGE	Consistently feel overwhelmed with managing their health	Keep it simple; do not overwhelm
	Not understand the need to actively participate in their health	Keep information basic; let them guide you
	Lack basic knowledge about their condition, treatment options or self-care responsibilities	Help them reduce anxiety and build knowledge
	Have trouble connecting behaviour to their health	Set easy, realistic goals; focus on current issues
SKILLS	Have poor problem-solving skills	Praise early and often; show empathy
	Struggle to follow their care team's directions	Help them build self-awareness and an understanding of their role
	Cope poorly with stress	Connect where they are most comfortable
CONFIDENCE	Have no ownership of their health	Provide high-touch support in the clinic, at home, by phone

Level 2

BECOMING AWARE BUT STILL STRUGGLING

“I could be doing more for my health.”

Individuals have some knowledge, but large gaps remain. Though they can set simple goals, they believe their health is largely out of their control.

Healthcare utilisation:

HIGH ED & A&E use

HIGH risk of avoidable ACS utilisation

HIGH risk of readmission

HIGH risk of missing appointments

LOW use of preventive care and clinical screenings

Domain	These individuals may:	How to support them:
KNOWLEDGE	Know they could be doing more for their health but are unsure where to start	Keep information basic and increase their role in their care
	Have some key knowledge gaps	Help close knowledge gaps
	Begin understanding the connection between their behaviour and their health	Provide high-touch support in the clinic, at home, by phone
SKILLS	Rely on doctor for guidance, but struggle to apply it	Set easy, realistic goals with skill-building and problem-solving
	Struggle to cope well with stress	Connect where they are most comfortable
CONFIDENCE	Have little experience (or success) making behaviour changes	Praise successes and increase confidence

Level 3

TAKING ACTION AND GAINING CONTROL

"I'm part of my healthcare team."

Individuals have the key facts and are building self-management skills. They are goal-oriented and strive for best-practice behaviours.

Healthcare utilisation:

LOW ED use

LOW risk of avoidable ACS utilisation

LOW risk of readmission

GOOD use of preventive care and clinical screenings

Domain	These individuals:	How to support them:
KNOWLEDGE	Have good goal orientation	Use in-bound or electronic channels to maintain contact
	Understand their health issues, treatment options and self-care responsibilities	Promote information-seeking behaviours
	Can connect their health to long-term life goals and are confident handling various aspects of self-care	Connect self-care behaviours to long-term benefits
SKILLS	Can achieve best-practice behaviours	Strive for best-practice behaviours
	Function as a partner with their healthcare providers	Offer a variety of tools for clients to utilise
CONFIDENCE	Have experienced success in managing their health	Praise successes and build on past successes
	Feel positive about practicing healthy behaviours, but have difficulty maintaining them during times of stress or change	Reinforce healthy behaviours; small steps can lead to big steps

Level 4

MAINTAINING BEHAVIOURS AND PUSHING FURTHER

"I'm my own health advocate."

Individuals have adopted new behaviours but may struggle in times of stress or change. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle is a key focus.

Healthcare utilisation:

VERY LOW ED and A&E use

VERY LOW risk of avoidable ACS utilisation

VERY LOW risk of readmission

VERY GOOD use of preventive care and clinical screenings

Domain	These individuals:	How to support them:
KNOWLEDGE	Have strong goal orientation	Use different modes of interaction
SKILLS	May still have some gaps in their health behaviours	Close any gaps for self-care to support health behaviour change
	Regularly practice recommended self-care behaviours	Reinforce strong self-management skills and push for more
	May need help planning for difficult situations, such as coping with stressful situations	Focus on skills that maintain behaviours in times of stress or change
CONFIDENCE	Feel in charge of their health and serve as their own health advocate	Ensure every contact has a specific purpose
	Feel very positive taking steps to be as healthy as possible	Strive for and push beyond best-practice behaviours
	Are resilient and can bounce back from tough days or weeks	Help them plan to overcome barriers and bounce back