



ENABLING QUALITY IMPROVEMENT IN PRACTICE

Tower Hamlets Our Latest Newsletter (07/09/2020)



The Doctor Will Zoom You Now

I am stealing this week’s message shamelessly from HealthWatch, since their recent work (all their work, really) is so topical to EQUIP’s endeavours. The insights they offer on Total Triage, as seen and experienced from the patient’s side, are precious. Private companies pay good money for this sort of insight. If you want to read the whole report, which is as juicy as seasonal black cherries from Kent, you won’t be sorry (it’s attached). If your appetite is more for a summary of useful points, this might be what you’re looking for.

The Doctor Will Zoom You Now: top tips

The Doctor Will Zoom You Now



Top Tips for getting the most out of the virtual health and care experience

For Patients

- Ask for a timeslot for when your remote consultation will take place.
- Let your health care provider know how you prefer to talk by phone, video or in-person.
- Find somewhere quiet and confidential and, if this isn't possible or is tricky, make this clear when you are making your appointment.
- Start with a phone call if you're not confident with video technology.
- Ask for help if you need it and, if possible, do a practice run with a friend.
- Take some time to prepare in advance, consider what you want to say and key questions you would like to ask.
- Ask your health care provider to summarise the next steps at the end of the appointment.
- Remote consultations can be useful for routine appointments or ongoing care with a health care practitioner.
- Not all appointments are suitable for remote consultations, if you would like to see someone in-person please say so.

For Health and Care Professionals

- Provide a precise time window for appointments.
- Check that the person is in a confidential and safe place to have the phone or video call.
- Understand the person's level of confidence using technology and give people a choice of how to communicate.
- Proactively check what the patient needs, clarify what is happening next and who is responsible for the next stages of care.
- Slow down the pace of the consultation, demonstrate active listening.
- Use the chat function in video calls to make the appointment more interactive, share links to information or summarise next steps.
- Don't ask people to provide information you already have access to.
- Give guidance about how the appointment will work, offer demonstrations, provide an opportunity for a test run/provide some training.
- Seek feedback about peoples' experiences and use this to improve the service.

The Doctor Will Zoom You Now: key findings and recommendations

Arranging a virtual consultation

1. *Feeling safe and comfortable*

It's important for people to feel safe, comfortable and that they have a confidential space in which to talk about their medical concerns. Most of those we spoke to hadn't received any information in advance about how the appointment would work or what they could do to help. It would be useful for patients to be alerted to this fact beforehand so that they can prepare for their appointment.

2. *Making the benefits known*

Secondly, to realise the benefits of people not having to travel to appointments, patients need a reasonable time window for their appointment. Where people are not given this, it leads to increased frustration, with missed calls or unexpected delays creating anxiety.

3. *Getting the format right*

Most of those we spoke to had telephone consultations, but a significant number felt that video would have been better.

During the appointment itself

4. *Giving people the time they need*

Whichever form of remote consultation is used, people were clear that it must not mean a compromise on the quality of the interaction. Appointments must not feel rushed, patients need to feel listened to and clinicians must have all the information they need to hand.

Test, learn and improve

5. *Seeking feedback*

As with any significant change it is important to seek feedback and to learn from what works and what needs improvement. Yet most participants in our research reported that they weren't asked for feedback about their remote consultation experience. When we asked them for suggestions, they identified many ways in which remote consultations could be made better. For example, enabling sessions to be recorded and played back later so people can confirm they have understood, or introducing closed captioning to help those with hearing loss.

Here's hoping you can take at least a few ideas from this excellent piece of work. Personally, I grabbed a handful. Just like cherries. 😊

Virginia

DOWNLOAD LINK: [The Dr Will Zoom You Now - Insights Report](#)