

From Couch to Coffee: CHAMP Empowers Health Goals That Matter

A new wave in chronic care puts patients in the driver's seat-starting with what they value most.

NALHN Intermediate Care Service (ICS): Wirth C, Pratt S, Maidment Z, Farndale H, Smith M, Laslett R, Roe, A,

The Chronic disease Hospital Avoidance Management Program (CHAMP) is quietly transforming lives across the community, one fishing trip or coffee date at a time.

Who is CHAMP?

CHAMP Practitioners are **occupational therapists, psychologists, dietitians, podiatrists, social workers, physiotherapists** and **exercise physiologists**.



CHAMP practitioners work alongside clients living with chronic conditions like **diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease** and **heart failure**.

NALHN catchment information:

- 4 of the 5 most **socioeconomically disadvantaged** areas in the state
- 9/10 adults have at least one **risk factor** (smoker/high alcohol consumption/obese/low or no exercise)
- 31/100 are living with *at least one of these 4 chronic conditions:* diabetes, lung condition, kidney disease, heart condition

Why CHAMP?

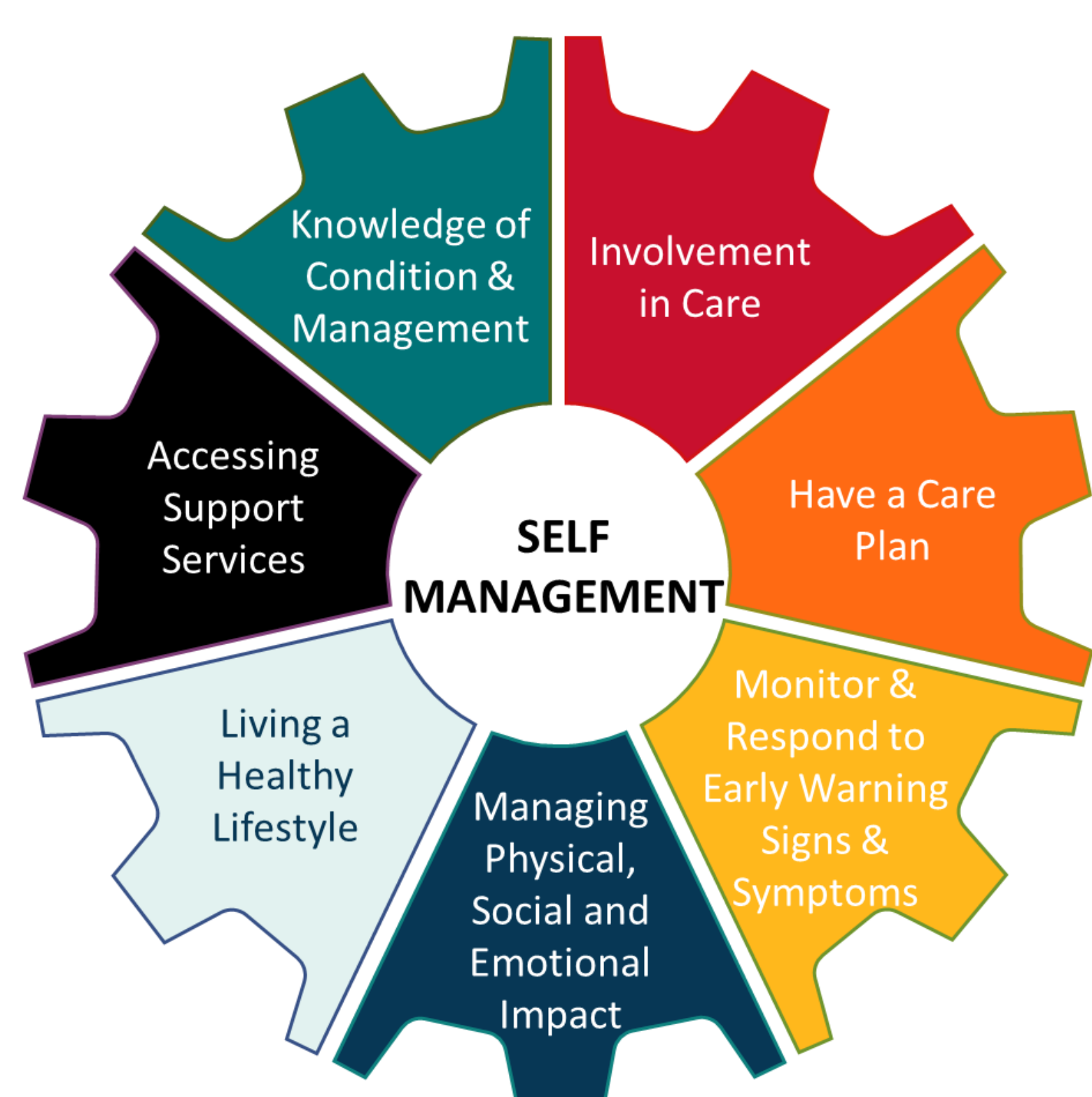
Self-management support is a well-recognised element of high-quality chronic disease care. CHAMP aims to reduce avoidable hospital admissions and maximise efficient use of the health system, by helping clients improve how they manage their own health and improve overall quality of life.

How?

Based on the **Flinders Chronic Condition Management Program** - a validated model that empowers clients to better manage their own health. Its approach is rooted in **motivational interviewing and behaviour change techniques**, helping people uncover their “why” for living a healthier life and planning actions they can take to work towards this.

“Instead of focusing on what’s wrong, we ask what matters,” said a CHAMP spokesperson. **“It might be wanting to go fishing again, see the grandkids more, or even just enjoy a weekly coffee catch-up. That’s the goal—and we build from there.”**

Clients work with their practitioner to examine their:



Together they create a care plan consisting of areas they want to work on to help progress towards being able to do what matters to them - their goal.

CHAMP practitioners and their client speak regularly reviewing progress, linking to support systems and building lasting skills that will assist them in the ongoing management of their health.

Does it work?

Client data from 2023-2024 financial year:

Age: 27-89 (66%<65yo) Sex: 52% female/48% male

Primary Chronic Condition:

- 40% Respiratory
- 13% Cardiology
- 45% Diabetes
- 1% Vulnerable

Outcome data from 2023-2024 financial year:

- Psychological distress scores reduced by 8.9%
- Clients reported a 22.2% reduction in their chronic disease related problem
- Clients stated progress of 36.5% towards their long-term behavioural goals
- Chronic condition related inpatient days decreased by 47%

Each client’s journey begins with a conversation—but it ends with tangible results and a sense of control that’s often missing in chronic care.

“CHAMP isn’t just about managing illness—it’s about reclaiming life,” said the spokesperson. “And that starts by helping people do what they love again.”

Learnings

- Flexibility & persistence in service delivery (in home, phone, in reach, flexible DNA/discharge policy)
- Regular contact (ideally fortnightly to maintain motivation)
- Behavioural goals (focus on what the client is doing, not the outcome)
- Targeting the ‘right’ referrals e.g. issues around self-management vs frequent presentation as a criteria for referral
- Interprofessional team (CHAMP sits within the Intermediate Care Service team and has advice and support from multiple allied health disciplines)
- Recruiting the ‘right’ practitioners for the role
- Considering pathways for advanced scope of practice
- Clinical governance requires the right leadership and skill set to understand the service, support staff development and provide professional oversight
- Demonstrating effectiveness (data on saved bed days is difficult and time consuming to access)

Conclusion

CHAMP is a highly effective allied health-led, client centred, self-management support program that builds on individual motivations to help clients achieve their goals AND reduce hospital days

