



Making All Contacts Count Through Advocacy (MACCA)

Introduction to MACCA

MACCA is an approach to holding conversations around health with people experiencing homelessness and is designed specifically for non-health specialists in the homelessness sector.

It will help you to have open and useful conversations with people experiencing homelessness at any point in their health journey. It uses skills that will enable you to not only support people, but hand the power back to them, ensuring they have the necessary life skills to keep progressing, even once support has been removed.

MACCA has been designed by Groundswell based on a related NHS approach called MECC and our own experiences of advocating around health issues through our peer advocacy service. This brief guide outlines the main principles of the approach. To learn more, you can sign up for our one-day MACCA training by contacting Rachel.Brennan@groundswell.org.uk.

Why MACCA?

Homelessness causes poor health, and poor health causes homelessness. People experiencing homelessness have high health needs but experience huge health inequalities. They may face significant barriers to accessing healthcare including facing discrimination and stigma, having multiple health and support needs, difficulties registering with a GP or receiving correspondence due to no fixed or changing addresses, struggling with accessing digital systems and having previous negative experiences of services.

People experiencing homelessness also have the least amount of autonomy. As workers and volunteers, you have the opportunity to improve health and save lives. You already have experience in building relationships with clients who may distrust other professionals. You already have skills in having difficult conversations and picking up on conversational cues.

MACCA is about strengthening both your skills and those of the people you are working with, giving you the confidence to approach service users on health topics and the tools to be able to hand back the power to people experiencing homelessness.

What is MACCA?

MACCA aims to **Make All Contacts Count** by using every contact with a person as an opportunity to encourage behaviour change and discuss health through the use of **Advocacy** skills. It is adapted specifically for a homelessness setting from a related NHS approach called MECC*. The key features of MACCA are:

- Initiating a conversation
- Using an advocacy approach
- Offering tailored support and guidance (with informed consent)
- Active signposting to other support services

MACCA takes an advocacy approach, meaning that it is person-led and places the wishes of the individual at its heart. It does not involve taking charge or telling people what to do. It is about opening a conversation and using active listening skills to explore the topic using open questions. A core part of advocacy is empowerment and encouraging people to self-advocate and do things for themselves when they are able. This helps to build confidence and the ability to self-advocate in the future.

MACCA is not about you becoming a specialist in a certain health area or providing ongoing health support to particular individuals –unless that's already your role. It is about you helping other people to know how they can improve their own health and wellbeing and have more of a say in the way they receive treatment and care.

* Making Every Contact Count is promoted by NHS England, Public Health England, and other statutory bodies. It is an approach to behaviour change that uses the millions of day-to-day interactions that organisations and individuals have with other people to support them in making positive changes to their physical and mental health and wellbeing. The aim of MECC is to use brief everyday interactions to promote key messages around health issues such as smoking and diet. You can read more here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/making-every-contact-count-mecc-practical-resources>

MACCA (MAKING ALL CONTACTS COUNT THROUGH ADVOCACY)

Principle	Questions	Purpose
ASK	Can we spend a few minutes talking about your health?	The entire purpose of this ask is to get permission from your client to speak on a health matter.
	Are you ok Bob? You seem to be limping/that looks sore.	There is no point trying to have a conversation with someone who doesn't want to have this discussion. It is also a very personal conversation.
ASSESS	Is this something you are interested in changing?	The point of assessing is to discover what the client already knows about their health condition and options for treatment.
	What might get in the way or make it difficult for you?	We are also looking to discover if there is any prior experience in this area that we can lean on, that will support the client's journey.
ASK MORE	What do you want to do about that?	This area is where we really see our advocacy planning stage come into practice.
	How do you want me to support you?	It should be at least 90% questions from you to ensure that decisions are made by the client and not given by you, either as suggestions or as a directive.
	What has helped before?	
	What do you want to achieve at your appointment?	
ASSIST	Can I tell you about some of the support that is available locally?	
	When appropriate, refer/signpost to support services.	The assisting is all about discovering how the client wants to be supported and handing them the tools (where possible) to take action for themselves. Advocacy should play a very heavy part in this area. Where support is needed to achieve anything, we will always be looking for informed consent from our client for us to act on their behalf in this way.

ADVOCACY
 " Advocacy is taking action to support people to say what they want, secure their rights, pursue their interests and obtain the services they need."