



HCANZA Health and Wellness Coaching – Evidence Brief

This submission presents a curated listing of evidence sources relevant to the role and efficacy of Health and Wellness Coaches accredited by the Health Coaches Australia and New Zealand Association (HCANZA). As part of the emerging allied health and preventative care workforce, HCANZA-accredited coaches adhere to rigorous professional standards and competencies, supporting participants in achieving self-directed health and wellbeing goals. The evidence sources included in this document demonstrate the value, scope, and outcomes of health and wellness coaching (HWC), and are intended to inform consideration of this workforce within NDIS planning, funding, and service delivery provider frameworks.

The evidence supports HWC as a valid, evidence-based strategy within disability settings—effective at boosting personal recovery, mental health, self-management, and quality of life. Its effectiveness across diverse populations (psychosocial, chronic illness, pain, youth disability) demonstrates broad applicability for NDIS-funded supports. The findings are derived from the [*Compendium of Health and Wellness Coaching: 2023 Addendum*](#), which reviews over 480 peer-reviewed studies, including more than 140 randomised controlled trials.

Key Benefits of HWC Relevant to the Disability Sector

(Bolded text below relates to content referenced in Compendium)

1. Improved Functional Outcomes and Independence

- HWC interventions enhance **functional independence**, reduce **daily care burden**, and support **goal-directed behavioural change**.
- Participants with chronic pain, arthritis, and musculoskeletal conditions showed **significant improvements in mobility, activity levels, and daily functioning**, contributing directly to improved participation in community and economic life.

2. Reduced Hospitalisations and Healthcare Utilisation

- Studies on respiratory conditions such as COPD demonstrated that HWC **reduced hospital admissions and emergency episodes**.
- Participants with fibromyalgia and other chronic conditions experienced **lower health care utilisation**, indicating potential for cost-effective disability support models.

3. Psychosocial Recovery and Mental Health Benefits

- Across multiple conditions (e.g., cancer, chronic pain, respiratory disease), HWC interventions were associated with **reduced depression, increased social connectedness**, and improved **emotional well-being**.
- These outcomes align with the **NDIS psychosocial recovery framework**, supporting participant empowerment and reduced support dependency.

4. Relevance to Underserved and Diverse Populations

- The compendium reports a significant increase in HWC studies targeting **ethn racially diverse, rural, and underserved populations**.
- This indicates HWC's flexibility and potential for delivering **equitable, culturally appropriate disability supports**.

5. Enhanced Accessibility through Telehealth and Digital Delivery

- HWC is increasingly delivered via **telehealth, phone, and online platforms**, with **high levels of engagement and acceptability** reported among people with disability.
- This improves accessibility for individuals with **mobility, sensory, or geographical barriers**, and complements the NDIS focus on capacity building through technology.

6. Self-Management, Agency, and Goal Achievement

- Coaching interventions emphasise **self-efficacy, personalised goal-setting, and health literacy**, helping participants take ownership of their health and wellbeing.
- These outcomes directly support **NDIS objectives of participant choice, control, and long-term capacity building**.

7. Application Across Lifespan and Disability Types

- Evidence covers coaching for **children with physical disabilities**, working-age adults with chronic illness, and older adults with multiple morbidities.
- HWC demonstrates versatility across **age cohorts, disability presentations**, and support goals.

The 2023 Addendum to the Health and Wellness Coaching Compendium offers compelling evidence that HWC is a safe, scalable, and effective intervention for people living with disability. Benefits include increased independence, reduced health care reliance, improved mental health, and enhanced self-management. HCANZA-accredited health and wellness coaches, operating under nationally recognised standards, are well positioned to contribute meaningfully to the NDIS participant pathway through goal-oriented, person-centred coaching.

Other Evidence Sources

Findings

Health and Wellness Coaching (HWC) improved short-term self-efficacy, quality of life, and depression for patients with chronic conditions.

Reference

Boehmer, K. R., Álvarez-Villalobos, N. A., Barakat, S., de Leon-Gutierrez, H., Ruiz-Hernandez, F. G., Elizondo-Omaña, G. G., Vaquera-Alfaro, H., Ahn, S., Spencer-Bonilla, G., Gionfriddo, M. R., Millan-Alanis, J. M., Abdelrahim, M., Prokop, L. J., Murad, M. H., & Wang, Z. (2023). **The impact of health and wellness coaching on patient-important outcomes in chronic illness care: A systematic review and meta-analysis**. *Patient Education and Counseling*, 117, 107975. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pec.2023.107975>

Findings

A patient-led goal setting intervention was significantly more effective than advice to exercise for improving outcomes in disability, pain intensity, quality of life, self-efficacy and kinesiophobia in chronic LBP. These improvements were maintained at 12 months. Smaller effects were seen in measures of depression, anxiety and stress.

Reference

Gardner, T., Refshauge, K., McAuley, J., Hübscher, M., Goodall, S., & Smith, L. (2019). **Combined education and patient-led goal setting intervention reduced chronic low back pain disability and intensity at 12 months: a randomised controlled trial**. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 53(22), bjsports-2018-100080. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bjsports-2018-100080>

Findings

- Health coaching produces positive effects on chronically ill patient's lives.
- Health coaching motivates changes in chronically ill patients' lifestyle behaviour.
- Health coaching improves a patient's physical and mental health status.
- Health coaching supports the management of chronic diseases.

Reference

Kivelä, K., Elo, S., Kyngäs, H., & Kääriäinen, M. (2014). **The effects of health coaching on adult patients with chronic diseases: A systematic review**. *Patient Education and Counseling*, 97(2), 147–157. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pec.2014.07.026>

Findings

A patient-centred, concordant communication style—as used in a “coach approach”—best empowers patients to enact and sustain health behaviour change given the provision of autonomy and the cultivation of permissive flexibility, which are key components to a growth-fostering relationship that supports long-term change.

Reference

Matthews, J. A., Matthews, S., Faries, M. D., & Wolever, R. Q. (2024). **Supporting sustainable health behaviour change: The whole is greater than the sum of its parts**. *Mayo Clinic Proceedings. Innovations, Quality & Outcomes*, 8(3), 263–275. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mayocpiqo.2023.10.002>