

# How Can Nurse Counselling Support Your Patients?



**By the Agency for Integrated Care**

For about a third of her 38-year-long nursing career, Nurse Haslinda Abdullah has met and counselled patients of all ages and backgrounds, to help them make positive lifestyle changes and manage their conditions.

“I recall a 54-year-old female patient referred to me in January 2021 due to poorly controlled HbA1c levels,” she shared. “She had put in significant effort, and diligently stopped consuming sugary foods. However, she was consuming a substantial amount of carbohydrates and was unaware that this could lead to elevated blood sugar levels.”

“Hence, during the nurse counselling sessions, I educated her on the recommended portions using the ‘My Healthy Plate’ approach, an easy-to-understand visual guide developed by the Health Promotion Board. I also shared with her the various types of carbohydrates and dishes high in carbohydrates by referencing the AIC Eating for Health resource book.”

## **What does Nurse Counselling entail?**

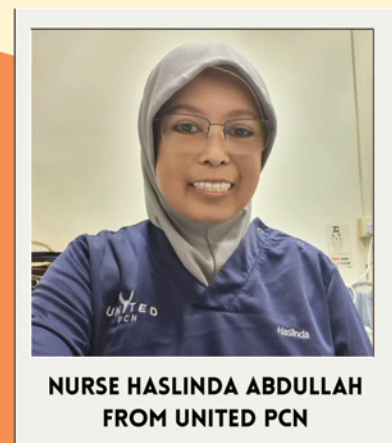
Since joining United Primary Care Network (PCN) in June 2020, Nurse Haslinda has been supporting this patient and many others through Nurse Counselling sessions. Nurse Counselling is a key part of team-based chronic disease management. It aims to empower patients, as well as to strengthen collaborative care between doctors and nurses.

Nurse Counselling includes a psychosocial triaging framework and clearly defines the scope of nurse interventions in developing a personalised care plan with the patient, to enhance patient empowerment. Through PCNs, nurses also provide other ancillary services such as diabetic retinal photography (DRP), diabetic foot screening (DFS) and spirometry.

Nurse Counselling is designed to meet the needs of different patients with various chronic conditions such as diabetes, hypertension and hyperlipidaemia. The psychosocial triaging framework applied is based on how informed and motivated patients are to improve their chronic health.

**There are different types of Nurse Counselling packages offered, depending on the needs of the patient:**

- Basic (1 session)
- Targeted (2 to 4 sessions)
- Comprehensive (for patients with Diabetes Mellitus or Asthma only, 4 sessions)
- Insulin Support (for patients with Diabetes Mellitus only, 6 sessions)



**NURSE HASLINDA ABDULLAH  
FROM UNITED PCN**



## What happens during a Nurse Counselling session?

During each Nurse Counselling session, nurses will use the biopsychosocial (BPS) model and motivational interviewing techniques to explore concerns, address misconceptions, assess patients' knowledge, and identify their priorities to facilitate behavioural change. This ensures a patient-centred approach that encourages shared decision-making, to empower the patient and strengthen their commitment to change.

Similar to Nurse Haslinda, Nurse Penny Chan has been working with a care team to support patients at Frontier Healthcare since 2018.

"I remember there was an elderly patient I met several months ago who procrastinated starting statins, and tried to control his diet to lower his cholesterol for 5 years but to no avail," said Nurse Penny.

Having attended the team-based training organised by AIC, Nurse Penny then applied the techniques she learnt and found them to be beneficial for the patients she counselled.

"I used the 'Motivational Interview' method that I learnt from the training to help the patient recognise the incongruence and the need to start statins soon to prevent complications that could be caused by high cholesterol," she added.

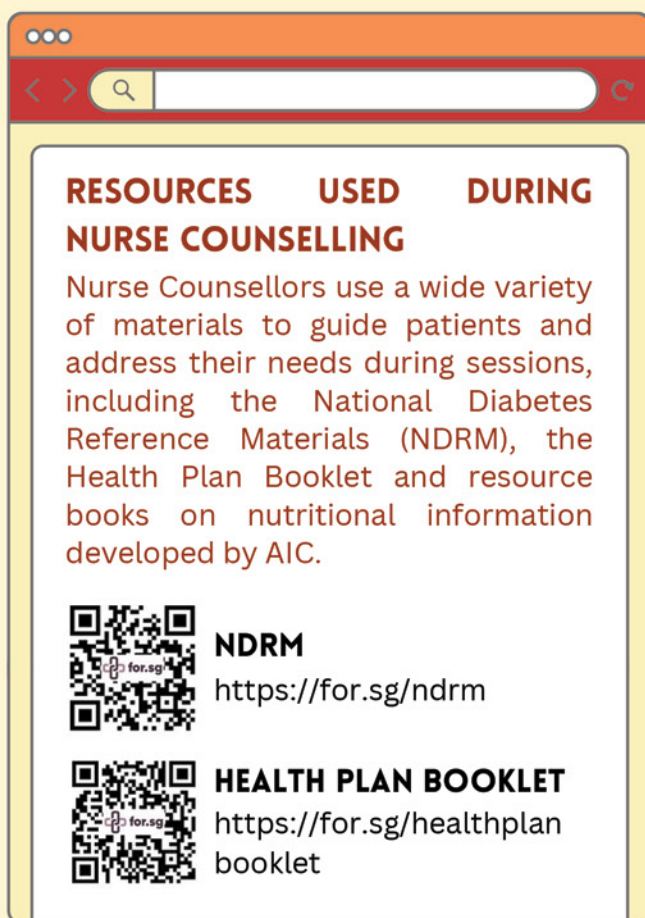
"As he was heading out of my consultation room, he turned back and said to me: "Missy, I think I should take your advice and start the medication soon for my family's sake. I don't want to break their hearts if I die from complications, since this is obviously something preventable as you mentioned, right?". He then proceeded to the consultation room next door to ask the doctor to prescribe statins for him."

## Positive outcomes as a result of collaboration between the patients and care teams

Through personalised Nurse Counselling, Nurses Penny and Haslinda have seen their patients' health and lifestyles improve.

"These successes were particularly meaningful when patients approach these changes with a positive mindset and a readiness to embrace a healthier lifestyle to manage chronic conditions effectively and prevent complications," said Nurse Haslinda. Such was the case for the 54-year-old patient with diabetes that she was counselling.


"When I reviewed her after about 3 months, her HbA1c levels demonstrated excellent control. This progress brought her immense joy. She successfully reduced her carbohydrate intake and incorporated more fibre into her diet, enabling her to stay fuller for longer periods. I review her annually and her blood results are maintained in good control."




The image shows a browser window with a search bar at the top. Below the search bar, the heading "RESOURCES USED DURING NURSE COUNSELLING" is displayed in bold red text. The text below explains that nurse counsellors use various materials like NDRM and Health Plan Booklet. Two QR codes are provided, each with a URL: one for NDRM (https://for.sg/ndrm) and one for the Health Plan Booklet (https://for.sg/healthplanbooklet).

**RESOURCES USED DURING NURSE COUNSELLING**

Nurse Counsellors use a wide variety of materials to guide patients and address their needs during sessions, including the National Diabetes Reference Materials (NDRM), the Health Plan Booklet and resource books on nutritional information developed by AIC.

 **NDRM**  
<https://for.sg/ndrm>

 **HEALTH PLAN BOOKLET**  
<https://for.sg/healthplanbooklet>

**Reach out to your PCN HQ to receive Nurse Counselling support today!**  
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