

## SNAP: 5-stage intervention



### What is the Support Needs Approach for Patients (SNAP)?

The Support Needs Approach for Patients (SNAP) is a health care intervention which seeks to enable person-centred care for patients with progressive conditions. SNAP uses an evidence-based validated tool, known as the SNAP tool, to help patients identify and express their support needs, and then discuss them with their health care professional.

The evidence for the SNAP tool comes from:

- patients with progressive disease
- informal carers (family and friends who help and support patients)
- and health care professionals

The SNAP tool comprises 15 items (broad areas of support need) in which patients with progressive disease commonly say they require support. The tool is short and simple to use for both patients and health care professionals.

SNAP is more than just the tool however: the tool underpins the 5-stage SNAP intervention for use in clinical practice. The SNAP tool can also be used as a standalone tool in research studies seeking to identify areas of unmet support need in patients with progressive conditions.

### Why do we need SNAP?

Patients with progressive conditions have support needs – they also have *unmet* support needs.

Some patients find it difficult to tell health care professionals about their support needs as...

- they are worried about health care professionals' time
- they are not sure what is appropriate or relevant to tell health care professionals about
- and they are very aware that health care professionals have things they need to do, or get on with, during an appointment – and the health care professional tends to be “in the driving seat” of consultations

It's difficult for health care professionals to meet patients' support needs if they don't know what those needs are.

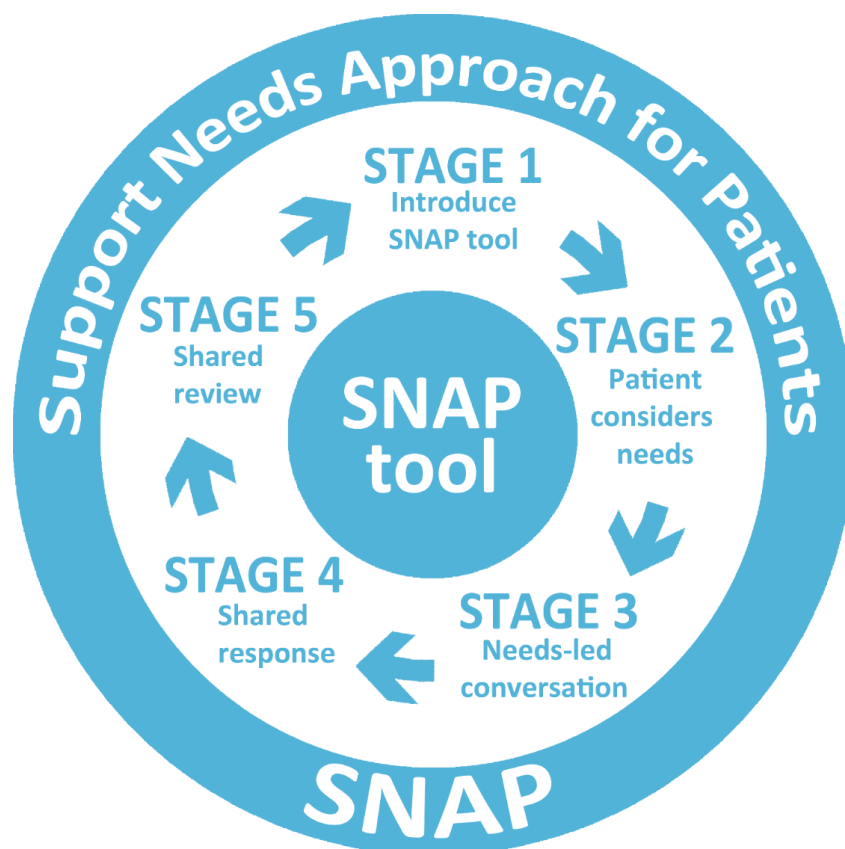
Patients therefore need a tool to help them identify and express their support needs to a health care professional – a tool to help overcome their concerns and to act as a prompt. Such a tool could then help start a needs-led conversation with the health care professional about their unmet support needs.

### What are the five stages of SNAP?

SNAP is more than the SNAP tool. SNAP is a 5-stage person-centred intervention which is facilitated by the health care professional but led by the patient. It seeks to enable person-centred care.

Within SNAP the patient is enabled to say what is most important to them, at that moment in time, and what they feel would help support them. It is person-centred in that at every one of the five stages the patient is at the centre of the activity – they are “in the driving seat”.

- 1) SNAP begins when patients are introduced to the SNAP tool
- 2) Patients then use the SNAP tool to consider and indicate the areas in which they need more support – by answering the 15 evidence-based questions
- 3) A needs-led conversation then takes place between the patient and the health care professional using the patient-completed tool, which enables the patient to prioritise and express their individual support needs
- 4) Together, the patient and health care professional then agree on what (further) supportive input would be valuable and create a shared action plan
- 5) A shared review of the patient’s support needs is then carried out, by the patient and health care professional, at another point in time



### What does the SNAP tool look like?

The SNAP tool, which underpins SNAP, uses a simple question and tick answer format to ask patients to show which areas they need more support with. The 'visibility' of common areas of support provided by the tool has been reported as helpful for patients. Patients can indicate whether, or not, they need more support in relation to each broad area of support need.

Extract from the SNAP tool...

**How are you?**

We would like to know what support you need. Please tick the box that best represents your needs now, for each statement below.

| Do you need more support with...                            | No | A little more | Quite a bit more | Do you need more support with...               | No | A little more | Quite a bit more |
|---|----|---------------|------------------|--|----|---------------|------------------|
| ...understanding your illness                               |    |               |                  | ...practical help in the home or garden        |    |               |                  |
| ...managing your symptoms (including medication and oxygen) |    |               |                  | ...your personal care (e.g. dressing, washing) |    |               |                  |
| ...dealing with your feelings and worries                   |    |               |                  | ...aids or equipment to help you               |    |               |                  |

The content of the SNAP tool is evidence-based and has been validated in a population of patients with progressive disease (advanced COPD).

### Can SNAP be used with patients with conditions other than COPD?

Patients and health care professionals have also told us that although the SNAP tool was developed initially for patients with advanced COPD, the generic nature of items of the tool suggest it is relevant for patients with a range of progressive or non-curative conditions e.g. heart failure, frail elderly, Parkinson's Disease, stroke etc. This is probably because patients with chronic long-term conditions such as COPD have multiple co-morbidities, therefore the evidence on their support needs is unlikely to relate purely to their COPD but more likely to their support needs in general (and therefore related to all their conditions).

Further, the SNAP tool does not include the term "COPD" or refer specifically to lung symptoms.

### Can I use the SNAP tool in my clinical practice or research?

Yes – but you need a licence. The SNAP tool is copyrighted. A licence is required for organisations using the tool. You can request a licence via the licence page on the SNAP website.

SNAP website  
[theSNAP.org.uk](http://theSNAP.org.uk)

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## Further reading

- SNAP intervention:
  - <https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/blog/new-research-to-help-people-with-copd/170275>  
[accessed 10/09/2018]
  
- Validation of SNAP tool:
  - Gardener AC, Ewing G, Farquhar M. Validation of the Support Needs Approach for Patients (SNAP) tool to enable patients with advanced COPD to identify and express their support needs to healthcare professionals. (Marie Curie 2018 abstract). *BMJ Support Palliat Care* 2018;8:367
  - <https://spcare.bmj.com/content/8/3/367.2.citation-tools>
  - Full paper in preparation
  
- Development of SNAP tool:
  - Gardener AC, Ewing G, Farquhar M. Tackling the rhetoric: an evidence-based Support Needs Tool to enable supportive and palliative care in advanced non-malignant disease (Marie Curie 2017 abstract). *BMJ Support Palliat Care* 2017;7:354
  - <https://spcare.bmj.com/content/7/3/A354.1>
  - Full paper submitted – under peer review
  
  - Gardener AC, Ewing G, Farquhar M, on behalf of the SNAP1 Study Team. Towards person-centred care: development of a patient support needs tool for patients with advanced Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) in primary care (BTS Winter 2016 abstract). *Thorax* 2016;71(Suppl 3):A208-A209
  - <https://www.brit-thoracic.org.uk/document-library/learning-hub/winter-meeting-2016/winter-meeting-2016-programme-and-abstract-book/> [pages A208-A209]
  
- Background evidence for SNAP tool:
  - Gardener AC, Ewing G, Kuhn I, Farquhar M. Support needs of patients with COPD: a systematic literature search and narrative review. *International Journal of COPD* 2018;13 1021-1035
  - <https://www.dovepress.com/support-needs-of-patients-with-copd-a-systematic-literature-search-and-peer-reviewed-article-COPD>