



EFN Policy Statement on Public Health Virtual Coaching

The European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) represents over three million nurses and is the independent voice of the profession. The mission of the EFN is to promote the interests, status and practice of the profession of nursing in the EU.

In line with the EFN's views on the importance of investing in public health, primary care, prevention and community care, nurses play a crucial role in the design and deployment of Virtual Coaching – by using personalised behavioural real-time digital technology – as the algorithms used are based on the observation of multiple risky behaviours influencing health outcomes. These risky-behaviours are directly related to individuals' educational attainment, qualifications for employment, ability to form relationships, family, and health status (multi morbidity) and even disability (mortality).

Nurses working in the area of public health, operating in and with communities, engage with the virtual coach because these virtual tools (e.g. serious gaming and avatars) can tackle personal issues at any moment the individual requests support or wishes to change their behaviour, **complementary to the face-to-face public health nurse**. Nurses active in public health will perceive the virtual coach as a support, as the virtual coach will understand and learn about the individual and provide behavioural coaching in near real-time. There will be completely personalised coaching and prompt reactions to the person with new behaviours that break their negative habits and expand their behavioural flexibility. Public Health Virtual Coaching changes the way people live their lives in real time and in real life.

The EFN therefore:

- Encourages stakeholders to invest in primary prevention, and use Virtual Coaching as a support to change impactful multi-faceted behaviour;
- Perceives multidisciplinary coaching in health and social care ecosystems as key to achieve integrated care;
- Builds on a holistic approach to public health and health care, in which nurses play a central role in managing systems, conditions and diseases;
- Considers gender and health inequities as cross-cutting items when designing Virtual Coaching methodologies;
- Expects Virtual Coaching will increase empowerment and resilience for the entire population.

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