

# Appreciating the Unique Characteristics and Needs of High Cost, High Needs Populations using *Personas*

## Person-Centered Care

A persona is a research-based “empathy tool” that helps portray the experiences, motivations, goals, and barriers of a patient population too often seen solely through the lens of cost or clinical data.

This whole-person perspective allows us to consider health services and system-level changes that will more closely align care delivery with the underlying behavioral and socioeconomic realities of the human experience.

## System Considerations

Personas are useful for identifying gaps in health system performance and design for a given patient population.

With a deeper understanding of the unique needs of key populations, health systems are better able to target and prioritize services as well as develop efforts to reduce costs.

## Deep Insights

Instead of viewing a patient as a data point of what might be a short term intervention, personas lend rich insights into the underlying factors impacting a person's total health experience.

Personas convey the consumer's voice and shed light on a population's pain points and needs.

# Patient vs. Person: How Their Concerns Differ

## Patient

Affordable  
care and  
meds

Incentivized  
care

**Provider  
relationship**

Patient-centered care

Care team  
collaboration

Convenient access  
to Services

## Person

Self-management  
capacity

Family  
history

System savviness

**Resiliency**

Coping  
style

Energy level

**Social support**



# Major Complex Chronic Personas

## Perspectives of Adults Living with Multimorbidity

### Struggling Sam

#### Patient

- Feel dismissed, abandoned, and scorned when doctors will not take the time to help me
- Sad to lose the doctor I liked because of insurance changes
- Overwhelmed by all the appointments
- Resent the medical equipment I have to use
- Wish my appointment were sooner

#### Person

- Frustrated people don't recognize the progress I've made so far
- Feel dazed; realize the seriousness of my issues
- Try to avoid the pity party; feel ready to give up
- Feel trapped sitting at home not driving
- Grieve for what I've lost
- Worry they won't hire me full-time because I'm sick

### Coping Claire

#### Patient

- Relieved I can get the care I need to stay on my feet
- Relieved to have a name for what is wrong with me
- Feel reassured my doctor cares about my well-being
- Grateful my doctor takes time to talk about life
- Make sure I understand my doctor's explanations
- Refuse to let my health issues define my life

#### Person

- Feel fortunate to have people who will help me on really bad days
- Accept the fact I need help
- See that it could be worse
- Start to think about my future again
- Feel supported by other people's congratulations
- Feel good about my progress

# Major Complex Chronic Personas

## Perspectives of Persons Living with Multimorbidity

### Struggling Sam

“ You get stigmatized more so if you're African American. The minute I come in and say I'm hurting, the doctor immediately assumed that I was there for narcotics.”

“ It was like they [the clinic] were just telling me something to get me out of the office in the few minutes they had to work with me...like I wasn't a real person.”

“ I feel like my body's dying a very slow death.”

“ I got out of the hospital, I was like in a daze. I was on 12 different pills...my nerves were shaking and I couldn't sleep...and I couldn't sit still.”

### Coping Claire

“ I want to be able to stand on my own two feet and have a sense of independence.”

“ My doctor has a way of talking to me...It puts me at ease. He talks to you rather than at you.”

“ My health insurance does not cover any of that [preventative YMCA aerobic class].”

“ I choose to live; I'm not ready to die...There's so much more that needs to be done.”

## Struggling Sam

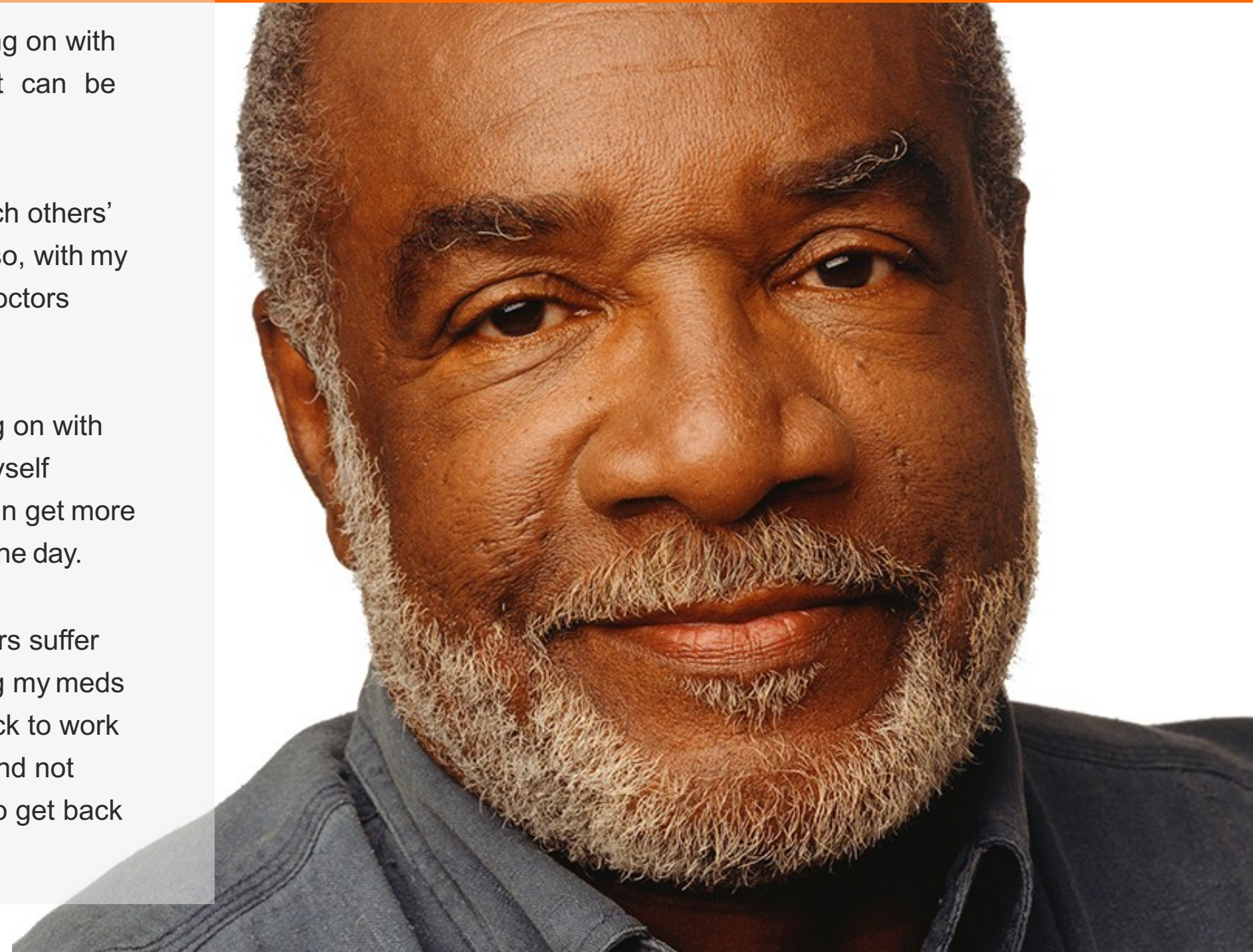
I don't want to hear any more bad news. I may never know all that is going on with me. On days when I'm forced to plan my day around my pain, it can be challenging to get around.

My doctors seem to be giving up on me, and at times we even get on each others' nerves. Yes, for the thousandth time, I know I need to lose weight. Even so, with my insurance changing next month, the thought of having to switch to new doctors exhausts me.

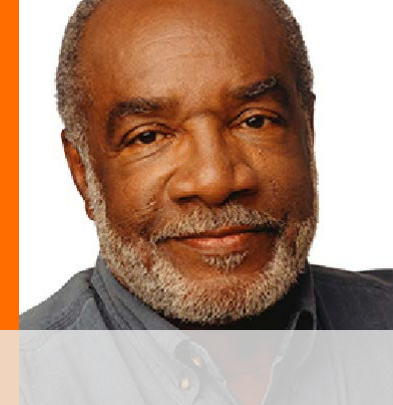
I've nearly given up trying to sort through the complexity of all that's going on with my health right now. I wish I weren't such a burden on others, so I find myself suffering in silence many days. Understanding my coverage and how I can get more help is daunting. But somehow the good Lord helps me make it through the day.

The cards seem to be stacked against me. I've seen other family members suffer through similar health issues, and I seem destined to follow suit. Affording my meds is a constant struggle, not to mention keeping on top of them. Getting back to work seems less and less likely and I miss it. Although many days I'm in bed and not feeling well, there are also days when I wonder if just maybe I'll be able to get back to being myself once again and enjoying the things I used to enjoy.

“ Why me? My life is altered to the point where I can't enjoy certain things I was doing before.”



# Struggling Sam



## Goals

- Feel like myself again
- Ease my pain; not be so tired
- Get relief from my symptoms
- Help others understand

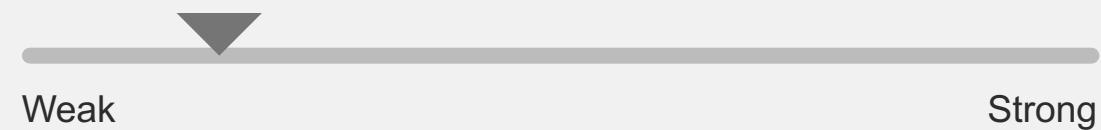
## Motivations

- Making it through today
- Fear that I'll end up like others
- Being less of a burden on family
- Being treated like a real person

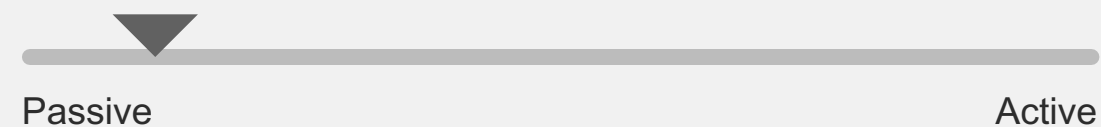
## Barriers

- Lack of social support
- Inflexible employers
- Pain and fatigue
- Lack of affordable services

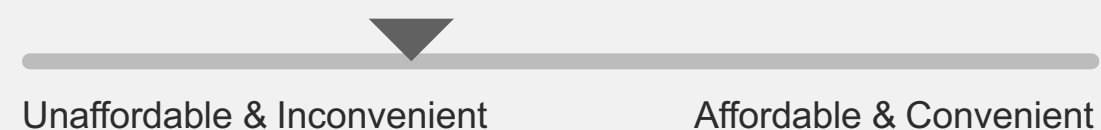
## Social Support



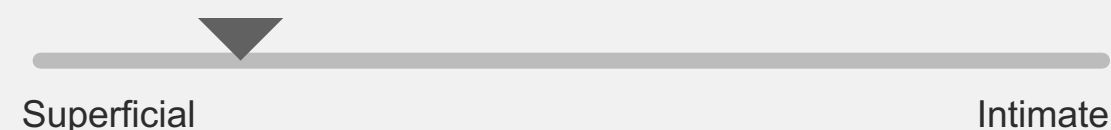
## Coping Style



## Cost & Convenience of Care



## Provider Relationship



## Patient Considerations

- Help me get from pain to possible
- Share good news to contrast the bad
- Simplify my pills and appointments
- Understand me, don't resent me

## System Considerations

- Appreciate how tight money is for me
- Support my lack of support
- Help me navigate my coverage
- Keep me with doctors who know me

## Coping Claire

I've made peace with the fact that my health may never be what it used to be, and I'm pleased with how much I'm able to do now on my own. I'm grateful we've been able to get things under control, because I'm determined to take my grandkids to the amusement park this summer.

Things were intense there for a while. Thank goodness for my daughter. Back when I was trying to get to the bottom of my pain, she was so supportive. Without someone coming to my appointments with me, there's no way I would have remembered all that my doctors were asking me to do and all they were explaining to me. Thank heavens I understand what's going on with my body now.

I'm so grateful for the doctors and nurses and many others who've listened to me and taken time to get to know me. I feel like they get me. The one-on-one makes all the difference. It's such a relief when I get a new doctor and I can tell they care. I need all the help I can get to stay ahead of the pain.

There are still plenty of bad days, and I'm very anxious about what might happen when my health starts to spiral. Since I'm not as sick as I once was, it's frustrating that it's getting harder to convince my insurance to cover things that I think are really helping me stay well.

“ I have a good support system. I have friends and family who know exactly what's going on. They seem to really show concern and really care how I'm feeling.”



# Coping Claire



## Goals

- Be there for my loved ones
- Enjoy life and be my best self
- Stay ahead of pain
- Avoid triggers

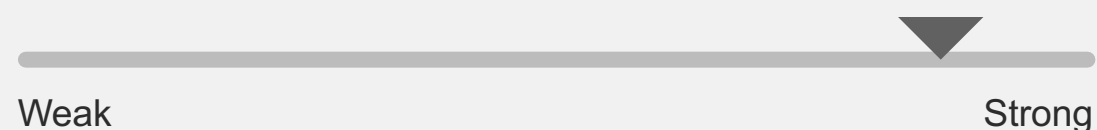
## Motivations

- Doing as much for myself as I can
- Keeping things under control
- Support from family and friends
- Knowing my doctor understands me

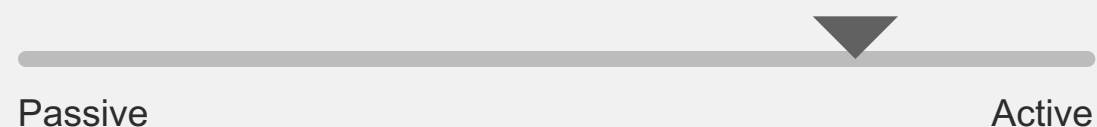
## Barriers

- Anxiety for the future
- Inconsistent support
- Lack of affordable medicines
- Lack of between-visit care

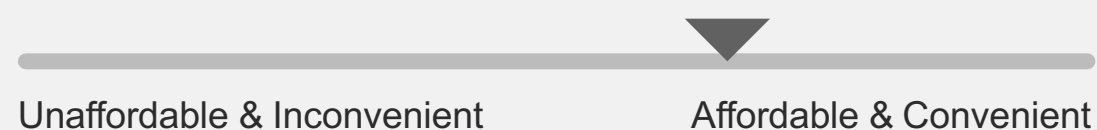
## Social Support



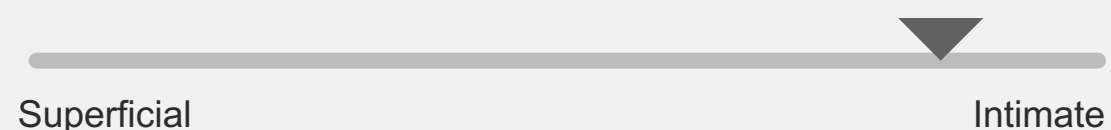
## Coping Style



## Cost & Convenience of Care



## Provider Relationship



## Patient Considerations

- Acknowledge my progress
- Reinforce what bolsters my resilience
- Support me as I figure out new me
- Help me avoid becoming complacent

## System Considerations

- Don't cut my care and services short
- Include my supporters in my care
- Don't let system penalties frustrate my progress
- Ensure my care team is talking together