

Stages 2 and 3: Gathering Information and Building the Relationship

Exploring the patient's problem

1. List 5 common terms or descriptions used by patients for each organ system (e.g. constipation, feeling light-headed, dizziness, shaky) that need clarifying to be understood accurately by a doctor.
2. List six common causes of headache that need to be considered in a fifty year old man. What *questions would you ask* to gather this information?
3. List the basic areas of information or data you need to cover medically and *what would you ask* - to make an accurate assessment of the following common presentations in primary care:
 - Exacerbation of asthma
 - Depression
 - Headache
 - Tiredness and lethargy
 - Low back pain
 - Prostatism
 - Skin rash
 - Rectal bleeding
 - Dyspepsia ...etc...

Disease and Illness

4. Explain your understanding of the concept of the disease-illness model.
5. What defines a disease - think of five examples of disease without illness
6. What are the components that constitute illness - think of five examples of illness without disease.
7. How (and why) does the contribution of *disease* and illness vary in:
 - Hypertension
 - Cancer
 - Bereavement
 - Degenerative spinal disease
 - Epilepsy... and how does this influence management?

Exploring the patient's perspective

8. Give some examples of how cultural and sociological factors determine a patient's perspective of illness.

9. How can you discover the patient's perspective of their illness?
10. Think of how you might phrase questions that ask patients directly for their
- Ideas
 - Concerns
 - Expectations
 - Feelings
11. Discuss the difficulties of patient who somatise. Think of how you might phrase questions that explore possible links between symptoms and emotions or feelings.
12. Consider how you might respond to the following patient concerns:
- *"I've been getting a stiff neck at work this week and now I'm frightened I might be getting meningitis!"*
 - *I think my child is dyslexic - and I would like him allergy tested doctor."*
 - *I don't seem to have any sex drive anymore and I don't feel I can cope with the children either - do you think it is caused by my hormones?"*
 - *"I think I've got dementia - my memory's so poor these days and now I've started leaking urine - I'm sure this means I'm not going to live much longer."*
 - *"Everything I do seems to go wrong, I'm a hopeless mother, I've fallen out with my best friend and I can't even find a part-time job - don't you think that makes me sound useless."*
 - *"I wonder if you could prescribe some antibiotics for Harry - he has such a bad cough!"*
 - *" I wonder if you could give me a full check-up Dr - being 40 and all that"*
 - *"I find it very difficult to walk these days - do you think I'll need a wheelchair soon?"*
 - *"I don't want to take any medication for my diabetes or else it will stop me driving my truck."*
 - *I think Dr. J. was awful to me on the telephone last night - he didn't seem to care at all that I'd just brought John back from having a serious operation - I feel like making a complaint."*
13. Role-play a scenario with the supervisor presenting as a patient with a simple URTI. Make a determined effort to phrase questions using an open-ended line of enquiry first.

WORKSHEET:**Exercises to Practice Developing
Communication Skills in Stages 2
and 3 of the Consultation**

- 14.** Role-play a scenario with the supervisor presenting as a patient with rectal bleeding and a family history of bowel cancer. Try out the various phrases to directly cover their ideas, concerns, expectations and feelings.

- 15.** Role-play a scenario with the supervisor presenting as a very anxious person with headaches. Try out questions that attempt to explore possible links between their symptoms and their emotions and feelings. Discuss the non-verbal cues the supervisor was using.