

Using **internal summary** and **signposting** provides a method for the doctor to obtain order and appropriate control without sacrificing the benefits of openness.

Summarising allows you to:

- pull together and review what you have heard so far
- order the information into a coherent pattern
- realise what information you will need to obtain or clarify
- gain space to consider where the consultation should go next
- separate and consider both disease and illness

Signposting is the twin skill of summarising and allows you to introduce and draw attention to what you are about to say. It also signals a change in direction or a move from one part of the consultation to another. It announces to the patient what you are going to and invites the patient to think with you.

Can I just check that I've understood you - let me know if I've missed something...

You mentionedCould I just start by asking a few more questions about....

Since we haven't met before, it will help me to learn something about your past medical history. Can we do that now?

I can see that you are in some discomfort but I need to ask you a few questions and make a brief examination to help sort out what exactly is going on.