

PATIENT COUNSELING

The patient counseling competition is a great opportunity to exercise implementing your clinical knowledge while interacting one-on-one with a patient. There are many approaches to counseling including the Indian Health Service's Three Prime Question method or APhA's QuEST communication process. This patient counseling module is a resource for you to better understand what the patient counseling session might entail and enhance your skills as a student pharmacist.

INDIAN HEALTH SERVICES: "THE THREE PRIME QUESTIONS APPROACH"

The IHS Three Prime Question method is an interactive way to approach patient counseling through the use of open-ended questions. This allows the pharmacist to assess the patient's understanding and fill in any gaps while respecting the patient's time and knowledge.

1. What did the doctor tell you what the medication was for? This question allows the pharmacist to prompt the patient to discuss the purpose of the medication in regards to what it is supposed to do and what problems or symptoms it is supposed to help.

2. How did the doctor tell you to take the medication? This question promotes discussion of how to use the medication. Concerns that can be addressed include how often the medication should be taken, how much is to be taken and for how long, and what to do if a dose is missed.

3. What did the doctor tell you to expect? This question allows the patient to discuss expectations about the medication including good and bad effects, what precautions need to be taken, how you will know if the medication is working, and what should be done if there is a bad reaction.



QUESTIONS THAT PATIENTS MAY ASK:

1. What is the name of the medication?
2. What results may be expected from taking it?
3. How does the medication work?
4. What time of day should I take it?
5. Are there any special instructions on how to use this medication?
6. Does food have any effect on this medication?
7. Do alcoholic beverages have an effect on this medication?
8. How long should I continue taking this medication?
9. What should I do if I miss a dose?
10. Which side effects should I report and which ones may I disregard?
11. How should I store this medication?
12. How long should I wait before reporting if this medication does not help me?
13. Do I have to take special precautions with this medication in combination with any prescription medications, OTC, or herbal products?
14. Is my prescription renewable and for how long of a period may it be renewed?
15. Does this medication come in a less expensive generic form?

- Adapted from *The Pill Book* (Harold M. Silverman)

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WHAT WILL BE EVALUATED IN THE PATIENT COUNSELING COMPETITION?

Judges will evaluate and score each team on the interaction and information presented during their patient counseling session. Participants will be expected to demonstrate efficiency in these three categories: Professional Knowledge, Communication Skills, and the Patient Interaction.

Professional Knowledge

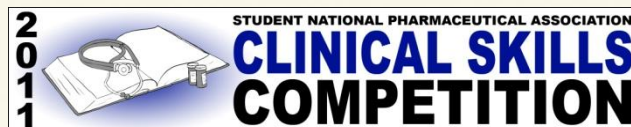
- Provide drug education to the patient in a manner that the patient can understand and use to benefit their therapy
- Convey accurate information concerning the patient's medication therapy including but not limited to: medication, indication, dosage, form, route, duration, pertinent side effects, precautions, interactions, missed dose procedures, storage recommendations, and specific techniques for self monitoring
- Discuss any potential therapeutic problems
- Correct any incorrect information relayed by the patient
- Recognize compliance problems and increase adherence

Communication Skills

- Display effective verbal communication skills
- Use an interactive approach to assessing and verifying patient understanding through the use of open-ended questions
- Display effective nonverbal communication
- Use language the patient will be able to understand
- Demonstrate effective counseling techniques

Patient Interaction

- Communicate to the patient why the counseling session and included information is important
- Systematically think through problems and present medication information in a logical order
- Display confidence and the ability to control and direct the counseling session
- Manage time during the session effectively
- Work efficiently with their team member



Resources for conducting a patient counseling session

McDonough R, Bennett M. Improving Communication Skills of Pharmacy Students Through Effective Precepting. *Am J Pharm Educ.* 2006; 70(3):58.

Herrier R. Case Studies in Patient Communication. In: Schwinghammer T, Koehler J, eds. *Pharmacotherapy Casebook: A Patient-Focused Approach.* New York, NY: McGraw-Hills; 2009:11-19.

Click the [links](#) below to read a few articles on patient counseling!

[Pharmacy Times - 10 Behaviors of Effective Counselors](#)

[Pharmacy Times - Out From Behind the Bench: Quick and Effective OTC Counseling](#)