

**Communication Skills**

**Interviewing**

# Interview

It is an important component in the disease management process as pharmacists obtain information for therapeutic decision making, such as asking whether a patient is allergic to penicillin (**simple requests**), determine whether a patient is taking medication properly (**complex one**).

# **Effective interviewing:**

**Also allows pharmacists to evaluate patient adherence to medication regimens by asking appropriate questions. It is a complex process in need of more attention, because the quality of the information received is not always optimal.**

# **Skills in effective interviewing:**

- **Listening.**
- **Probing.**
- **Use of silence.**
- **Establishing rapport.**

# **Listening:**

- **People are better senders of information than receivers of information.**
- **Need to concentrate much harder on listening.**

# **Listening techniques for the interview process**

- 1. Stop talking.**
- 2. Remove distractions.**
- 3. Good eye contact.**
- 4. React to ideas (not to person).**
- 5. Listen to how something is said (tone, voice, rate...).**
- 6. Read non-verbal messages**
- 7. Provide feedback to clarify messages.**

# Probing:

- **It is the use of questions to elicit needed information from patients or to help clarify their problems or concerns.**

# **The rules that the pharmacists should follow**

- 1. Phrasing of the question is important to avoid putting patient on the defensive.**
- 2. Time of questions is also important; and may raise the level of defensiveness.**

**3. The patient should be allowed to finish answering the current question before proceeding to the next one.**

**4. Avoid leading questions.**

**5. You should understand the difference between [closed-ended and open-ended question].**

# **Closed-ended questions**

- **Answered by Yes or No.**
- **Harder to formulated.**
- **Neither limits the patient response nor induces defensiveness**
- **Get factual information.**
- **Used for less fluent patients.**

# **Closed-ended questions**

- **Make patient avoid specific subjects and emotional expressions.**
- **Make patient more passive (you talk more).**
- **Reduce degree of openness.**
- **Easy of answer.**
- **Pharmacist-centered questions.**
- **Put limitation on response.**

# Open-ended questions

- **Greater freedom of response.**
- **Interaction is under control of pharmacist.**
- **Efficient use of time.**
- **Favored when patients emotions are key concerned.**

# Open-ended questions

- **More time.**
- **More leading role for the patient.**
- **More listening.**
- **Irritate patient.**
- **More irrelevant.**

# Use of silence:

- **Patient required time to think or react to question.**
- **If pause is because patient did not understand the question, repeat the question (rephrases).**
- **Do not fill empty spaces with unnecessary talk.**
- **Allow patient to relax.**

# Establishing rapport:

## Built on:

- 1. Mutual consideration and respect.**
- 2. Achieve by using sincere, friendly greeting, by being polite during discussion and not by stereotyping or prejudging the patient.**

# Successful interview depend on many factors:

## **1. Type of information:**

- **Determine the amount and type of information.**
- **Depends on interview's approach:**
  - **Directed (specific information) or**
  - **Non-directed (Free flowing interview)**

## **2. Type of environment:**

- Privacy should be provided.**
- As privacy increase, information retained by patient increase (i.e.; take medication correctly).**
- Privacy allows asking difficult questions and sharing honest opinions.**

# **3. Starting the interview:**

- **Start by greeting patient sincerely.**
- **Introduce yourself.**
- **State the purpose of the interview (this establish rapport).**

- **Outline what will happen during the interview.**
- **Put patient at ease.**
- **Mention the time needed, subjects to be covered and final outcome.**

# **The following suggestions make more effective interview:**

- **Avoid recommendation during information gathering process.**
- **Do not jump to conclusion.**
- **Use open- and closed-ended questions.**
- **Do not shift from one subject to another.**

- **Keep your goals clearly in mind.**
- **Determine patient's ability to learn specific information in order to guide you in your presentation of the material.**
- **Maintain objectivity.**
- **Use communication skills (probing, listening, and feedback).**

- **Watch non-verbal messages**
- **Remove patient defensiveness by moving from general to more specific.**
- **Brief note-taking (avoid suspicion)**

# **4. Ending the interview:**

- **Sometime more difficult than starting.**
- **People remember what was said last.**
- **To end interview you may need short summary.**

# **Interview using the telephone**

- 1. Prepare yourself to smile before you pick up the telephone.**
- 2. If at all possible, answer the telephone within the 1<sup>st</sup> three or four rings.**
- 3. Identify the pharmacy and yourself, providing both your name and position.**
- 4. Give your full attention to the call.**
- 5. Ask for the caller's name and use the name in the conversation.**

**6. If you must place the caller on hold, you must do the following:**

- **Tell callers why you want to put them on hold.**
- **Ask if they would mind waiting a brief time, or prefer to call back.**
- **On returning, say "thank you for waiting".**

**7. At the conclusion of the call, end it graciously.**

**8. If possible, allow the caller to hang up first.**

# **The following suggestion may help make these calls more efficient:**

- 1. Be sure you have any and all information related to the call readily available.**
- 2. Determine with whom you need to speak in order to achieve your goal for calling.**
- 3. Ask yourself "is this call necessary?"**

**4. Identify yourself, your position, and the pharmacy 1<sup>st</sup>. then, if it is not already provided to you, ask for the same information from person who has answered your call.**

**5. After introducing yourself, state in clear, concise terms the reason for your call.**

**6. If the nature of your call dictates that it will exceed more than a couple of minutes, ask the person whether they have time to talk with you for a few minutes.**

**7. Conclude the conversation with a sincere "thank you".**

**Thank you**