

# Patient interaction

Talking to students about your health condition



This involves an informal talk from you about your condition, maybe how you were initially diagnosed or the day-to-day impact that living with your condition has on you and your family. This helps the students appreciate how the same condition may present differently and shows the challenges individuals may encounter managing their health. You may be asked to share your experiences of using NHS services, both positive and negative, or what the healthcare staff could do to improve your experience.

The administrative staff or facilitator will make sure you know approximately how many students will be present and the length of time you have to speak.

They will also ensure you know if the teaching focuses on a certain topic, which will help guide your content. There may be time for questions or a group discussion with the students following your talk. It is worth having a few ideas in mind if the students are not forthcoming so you can raise these for them to think about.

## General tips

- If possible, arrive in the assigned teaching room or lecture hall BEFORE the students; this gives you the opportunity to relax and acclimatise yourself with your surroundings. It might also give you an opportunity to meet other Patient Educators who are attending at the same time with whom you can share experiences.
- You may get a little hoarse if you have to speak for an extended period of time so have a glass of water handy. It's also a useful prop if you need a few seconds to develop a response to a difficult question.
- Depending on the number of students, it can be useful to allow the students to introduce themselves and establish any areas of interest and their expectations regarding the session.
- Write brief notes to refer to in case your mind goes blank.
- If your session involves audio/visual materials, please ensure that the staff making the arrangements with you have a copy before the teaching session to ensure it works with the projection systems.

## Giving feedback to students following a session

Patient Educators may be asked to give feedback following a teaching session as this helps students to improve their practice. Feedback is best given immediately after something has happened so both parties remember what has occurred and should be given about things that can be changed and not things that can't.

- Ask the student what they thought went well or what they were particularly pleased with. You can also tell the student about something you thought went well. Always try to find at least one good thing to say and be specific - there is less value in saying that was 'very good' or that was 'not so good'. The feedback should address the good or poor performance of the student, for example: "I like the way you made me feel comfortable"; or, "you asked the questions in a very clear way"; or, "it would be better if you didn't use medical jargon as I didn't always understand what you were saying".
- Ask the student if they had any problems or if there was anything they were not happy with and why. You can also share aspects that you observed that did not go so well and how you think that could be improved.
- Your feedback could improve student practice so try to ensure that what you say can be seen and measured in some way; for example: "you seemed to have some difficulty listening to my heart. Normally, when my doctor does that, they put the stethoscope here".



## Health and safety

If you feel unwell on the day of teaching and can't attend the session, please just let us know. If you become unwell during a session, please alert the facilitator who will ensure you are looked after. The facilitator will let you know about general housekeeping and the location of fire exits before the session starts. If they don't, please ask for this information. Please complete the emergency contact form that is on our website and bring it with you to give to the facilitator at the start of the teaching session.