




Volunteer – Patient contact
(SP = Standard Patient)

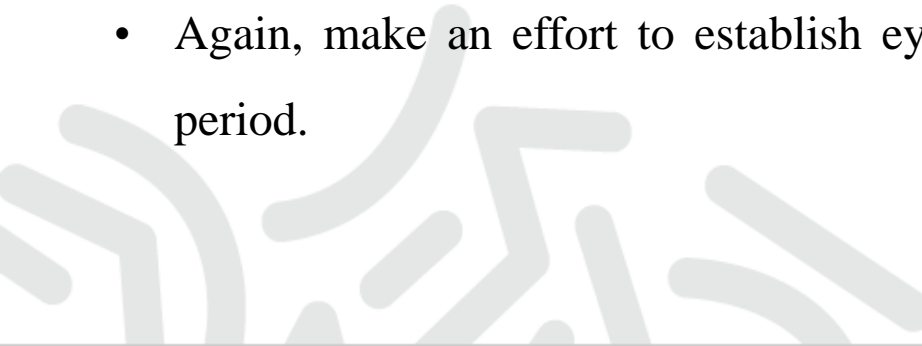


ENTERING THE ROOM

- Your entrance into the examination room is a critical part of the encounter.
- So before you enter the room, be sure to read and commit to memory the patient's last name, and then knock on the door.
- Once you have entered the examination room, ask the patient if he or she is the person identified on the door (eg, «Mr. Smith?»).
- If the patient does not respond to your query, consider the possibility that there may be a change in mental status



Address the patient by his or her name when you enter the room. Always make eye contact with the patient.

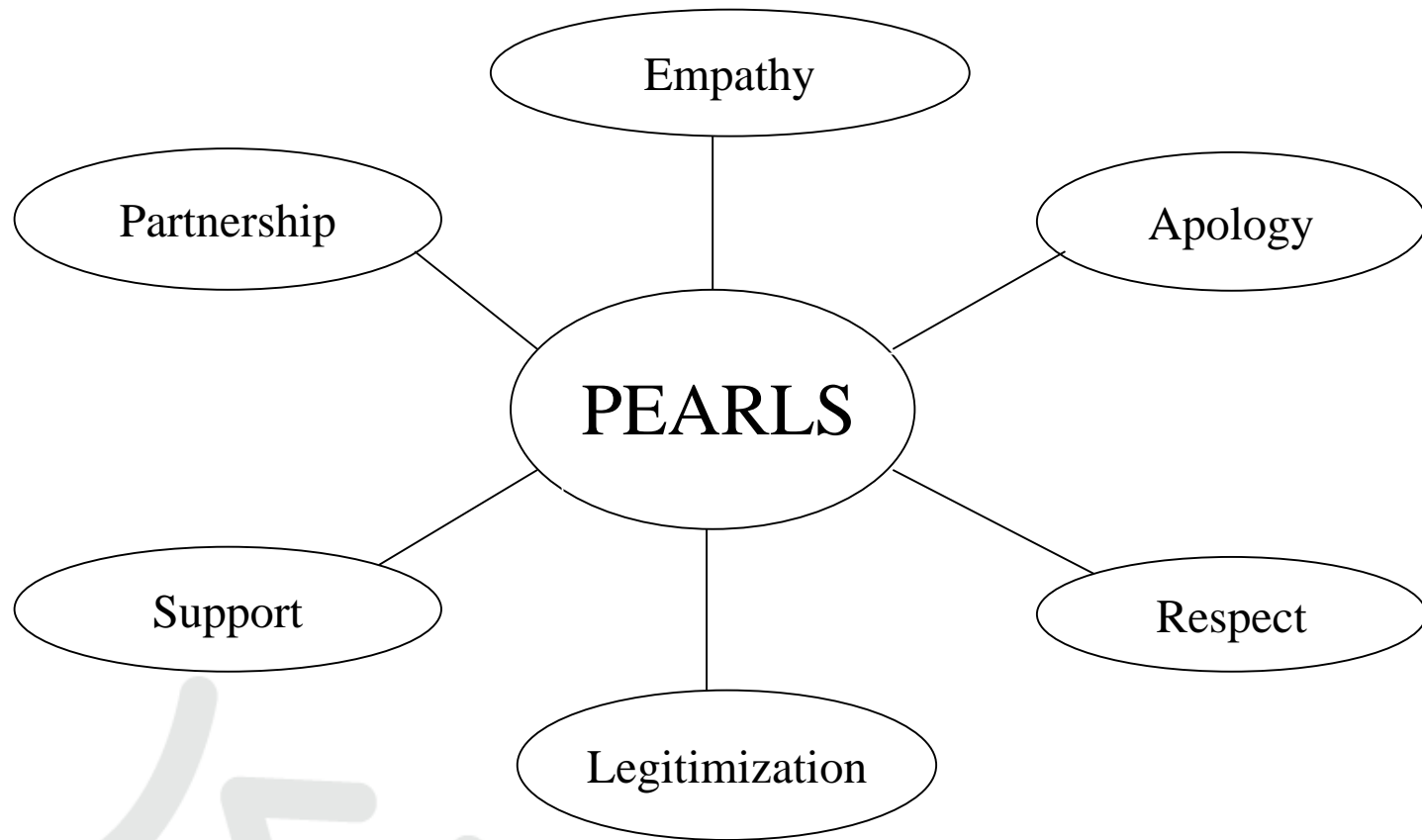
- After your initial entrance, you should shake hands with the patient and introduce yourself in a confident yet friendly manner (eg, «Hi, I am Dr. Morton. Nice to meet you.»).
 - You may also add something like «I would like to ask you some questions and do a physical exam.»
 - Again, make an effort to establish eye contact with the patient during this initial period.
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PCI – Patient-Centered Interview

- PCI involves **reflective listening**.
- Be a good listener and it will create trust
- Start the conversation by telling the patient:
 - what your role is
 - then asking about his or her concerns(eg, *«I was asked to see you for your chest pain; what are your concerns?»*).
- Listen without interrupting or expressing your own thoughts.
- You can comment with such phrases as «Is there anything else?» or «Tell me more about that.»
- Then summarize concerns using the patient’s own words as much as possible.
- Doing so builds trust by showing the patient that you are actively listening. In some instances it is also appropriate to express empathy, particularly if the patient is distraught, by saying something like «This must be a difficult time for you,» or “I can only imagine what you are going through.»
- Don’t forget! It’s NOT a doctor-centered interview, so build a joint strategy with the patient to address patient’s concerns.

Connecting with the patient.

Patient can express strong emotions such as anger. Be ready to respond with PEARLS:




PEARLS

- Partnership means that you and the patient are working together to identify his or her main concerns and to come up with solutions. Phrases that help facilitate partnership include «Let's deal with this together» and «We can do this.»
- Empathy is shown by acknowledging and showing understanding of the patient's feelings. For example, you might respond to a patient who expresses fear or anger with «That sounds hard» or «You look upset.»
- Apology refers to taking personal responsibility when it is appropriate to do so (eg, «I'm sorry I was late» or «I'm sorry this happened to you»).
- Respect means valuing the patient's choices, behaviors, and decisions (eg, «You have obviously worked hard on this.»).
- Legitimization validates the patient and shows understanding of his or her feelings and choices. An example of a legitimizing statement would be something like «Many of us would be confused or upset by this situation.»
- Support should be continually offered to the patient. You can offer support by saying something as simple as «I'll be here when you need me.»



How to take patient history

- You may take the history in front of the patient or sitting on the stool. Drape the patient.
 - Be relaxed and keep the clipboard on your lap. This way you show that you are open and friendly.
 - Remember about a distance approximately half a meter between you and your patient. This is how you respect privacy.
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Introductions

Knock on the door.
Verify the patient's name.
Introduce yourself and shake hands.
Make eye contact.
Drape the patient and cover the legs.

What History to Get

Start with an open-ended question.
Then focus on key organ systems and^

- ✓ **F**requency
- ✓ **O**nset
- ✓ **R**elieving factors
- ✓ **D**uration
- ✓ **P**recipitating factors
- ✓ **A**ssociated symptoms
- ✓ **P**revious episodes
- ✓ **P**rogression

How to Get it

Avoid technical medical terms.
Show **empathy** and address any patient concerns.
Maintain good **eye contact**.
Do not interrupt or rush the patient.

Before the Physical Exam

Summarize the history.
Ask if there is anything that was not covered.
Ask if patient has any **concerns** or questions.

How to take patient history

How to take patient history

It's not about WHAT, it's more about HOW you speak.

- Be not only professional but also friendly and show that you are ready to help.
- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Use short questions and simple phrases.
- Closer to the end try to avoid medical terms. Instead of renal calculus say kidney stone.
- Explain the terms.
- Don't hesitate to ask the patient to explain or repeat if you didn't get what they say: «Can you please explain what you mean by that?»
- Be patient, tolerant and nonjudgemental.
- Try not to interrupt the patient. If it's necessary, you can say: «Excuse me, Mr Patient. I understand how important these issues are to you but let me ask some additional questions about your problem. Alright?»

How to take patient history

Opening of the encounter:

- «Mr. Jones, hello; I am Dr. Singh. It's nice to meet you. I'd like to ask you some questions and examine you today.»
- «How can I help you today?»
- «What brought you to the hospital/clinic today?»
- «What made you come in today?»
- «What are your concerns?»

FOCUSED QUESTIONS

Pain:

- «Do you have pain?»
- «When did it start?»
- «How long have you had this pain?»
- «How long does it last?»
- «How often does it come on?»
- «Where do you feel the pain?»
- «Can you show me exactly where it is?»
- «Does the pain travel anywhere?»
- «What is the pain like?»
- «Can you describe it for me?»
- «What is the character of the pain? For example, is it sharp, burning, cramping, or pressure-like?»
- «Is it constant, or does it come and go?»
- «On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the worst pain you have ever felt, how would you rate your pain?»
- «What brings the pain on?»
- «Do you know what causes the pain to start?»
- «Does anything make the pain better?»
- «Does anything make it worse?»
- «Have you had similar pain before?»

FOCUSED QUESTIONS

Nausea:

- «Do you feel nauseated?»
- «Do you feel sick to your stomach?»

Vomiting:

- «Did you vomit ?»
- «Did you throw up?»
- «What color was the vomit?»
- «Did you see any blood in it?»

Cough:

- «Do you have a cough?»
- «When did it start?»
- «How often do you cough?»
- «During what time of day does your cough occur?»
- «Do you bring up any phlegm with your cough, or is it dry?»
- «Does anything come up when you cough?»
- «What color is it?" "Is there any blood in it?»
- «Can you estimate the amount of the phlegm? A teaspoon? A tablespoon? A cupful?»
- «Does anything make it better?»
- «Does anything make it worse?»

FOCUSED QUESTIONS

Headache:

- «Do you get headaches?»
- «Tell me about your headaches.»
- «Tell me what happens before/during/after your headaches.» «When do your headaches start?»
- «How often do you get them»
- «When your headache starts, how long does it last?»
- «Can you show me exactly where you feel the headache "What causes the headache to start?»
- «Do you have headaches at certain times of the day?»
- «Do your headaches wake you up at night?»
- «What makes the headache worse?»
- «What makes it better?»
- «Can you describe the headache for me, please? For example, is it sharp, dull, pulsating, pounding, or pressure-like?»
- «Do you notice any change in your vision before/during/after the headaches?»
- «Do you notice any numbness or weakness before/during/after the headaches?»
- «Do you feel nauseated? Do you vomit?»
- «Do you notice any fever or stiff neck with your headaches?»

FOCUSED QUESTIONS

Shortness of breath:

- «Do you get short of breath?»
- «Do you get short of breath when you're climbing stairs?»
- «How many steps can you climb before you get short of breath?»
- «When did it first start?»
- «When do you feel short of breath?»
- «What makes it worse?»
- «What makes it better?»
- «Do you wake up at night short of breath?» «Do you have to prop yourself up on pillows to sleep at night? How many pillows do you use?»
- «Have you been wheezing?»
- «How far do you walk on level ground before you have shortness of breath?» «Have you noticed any swelling of your legs or ankles?»

FOCUSED QUESTIONS

Urinary system

- «Do you have any difficulty urinating?»
- «Do you feel that you haven't completely emptied your bladder after urination?»
- «Do you need to strain/push during urination?»
- «Have you noticed any weakness in your stream?» «Have you noticed any blood in your urine?»
- «Do you feel as though you need to urinate but then very little urine comes out?»
- «Do you feel as though you have to urinate all the time?»
- «Do you feel as though you have very little time to make it to the bathroom once you feel the urge to urinate?»

Urinary symptoms:

- «Has there been any change in your urinary habits?»
- «Have you noticed any change in the color of your urine?»
- «Do you have to wake up at night to urinate?»
- «Do you have any pain or burning during urination?»
- «How often do you have to urinate?»

FOCUSED QUESTIONS

Bowel symptoms:

- «Has there been any change in your bowel movements?»
- «Do you have diarrhea?»
- «Are you constipated?»
- «How long have you had diarrhea/constipation?»
- «How many bowel movements do you have per day/week?»
- «What does your stool look like?»
- «What color is your stool?»
- «Is there any mucus or blood in it?»
- «Do you feel any pain when you have a bowel movement?»
- «Did you travel recently?»
- «Do you feel as though you strain to go to the bathroom or a very small amount of feces comes out?»
- «Have you lost control of your bowels?»
- «Do you feel as though you have very little time to make it to the bathroom once you have the urge to have a bowel movement?»

FOCUSED QUESTIONS

Weight:

- «Have you noticed any change in your weight?»
- «How many pounds did you gain/lose?» «Over what period of time did it happen?» «Was the weight gain/loss intentional?»

Appetite:

- «Has there been any change in your appetite?»
- «How is your appetite?»
- «Are you getting full too quickly during a meal?»

Diet:

- «Has there been any change in your eating habits?»
- «What do you usually eat?»
- «Did you eat anything unusual lately?»
- «Are there any specific foods that cause these symptoms?»
- «Is there any kind of special diet that you are following?»

Sleep:

- «Do you have any problems falling asleep?»
- «Do you have any problems staying asleep?»

FOCUSED QUESTIONS

Travel history:

- «Have you traveled recently?»
- «Did anyone else on your trip become sick?»

Past medical history:

- «Have you had this problem or anything similar before?»
- «Have you had any other major illnesses before?»
- «Do you have any other medical problems?»
- «Have you ever been hospitalized?»
- «Have you ever had a blood transfusion?» «Have you had any surgeries before?»
- «Have you ever had any accidents or injuries?»
- «Are you taking any medications?»
- «Are you taking any over-the-counter drugs, vitamins, or herbs?»
- «Do you have any allergies?»

FOCUSED QUESTIONS

Family history:

- «Does anyone in your family have a similar problem?»
- «Are your parents alive?»
- «Are they in good health?»
- «What did your mother/father die of?»
- «Are your brothers or sisters alive?»

FOCUSED QUESTIONS

Social history:

- «Do you smoke?»
- «How many packs a day?»
- «How long have you smoked?»
- «Do you drink alcohol?»
- «What do you drink?»
- «How much do you drink per week?»
- «Do you use any recreational drugs such as marijuana or cocaine?»
- «Which ones do you use»
- «How often do you use them?»
- «Do you smoke or inject them?»
- «What type of work do you do?»
- «Where do you live? With whom?»
- «Tell me about your life at home»
- «Are you married?»
- «Do you have children?»
- «Do you have a lot of stressful situations on your job?»
- «Are you exposed to environmental hazards on your job?»

FOCUSED QUESTIONS

Alcohol history:

- «How much alcohol do you drink?»
- «Tell me about your use of alcohol»
- «Have you ever had a drinking problem?» «When was your last drink?»

Administer the CAGE questionnaire:

- «Have you ever felt a need to cut down on drinking?»
- «Have you ever felt annoyed by criticism of your drinking?»
- «Have you ever had guilty feelings about drinking»
- «Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning ('eye opener') to steady your nerves or get rid of a hangover?»

FOCUSED QUESTIONS

Sexual history:

- «I would like to ask you some questions about your sexual health and practice»
- «Are you sexually active?»
- «Do you use condoms? Always? Other contraceptives?»
- «Are you sexually active? With men, women, or both?»
- «Tell me about your sexual partner or partners»
- «How many sexual partners have you had in the past year?»
- «Do you currently have one partner or more than one?»
- «Have you ever had a sexually transmitted disease»
- «Do you have any problems with sexual function?»
- «Do you have any problems with erections?» - «Do you use any contraception?»
- «Have you ever been tested for HIV»

FOCUSED QUESTIONS

Psychiatric history:

- «Tell me about yourself and your future goals»
- «How long have you been feeling unhappy/sad/anxious/confused?» «Do you have any idea what might be causing this?»
- «Would you like to share with me what made you feel this way?»
- «Do you have any friends or family members you can talk to for support?»
- «Has your appetite changed lately?»
- «Has your weight changed recently?»
- «Tell me how you spend your time/day»
- «Has there been any change in your sleeping habits lately?»
- «Do you take interest or pleasure in your daily activities?»
- «Do you have any problems falling asleep/staying asleep/waking up?» you enjoy any hobbies?»
- «Do you have any memory problems?»
- «Do you have difficulty concentrating?»
- «Do you have hope for the future?»
- «Have you ever thought about hurting yourself or others?»
- «Do you think of killing yourself or ending your own life?»
- «Do you have a plan to end your life?»
- «Would you mind telling me about t?»
- «Do you ever see or hear things that others can't see or hear?»
- «Do you hold beliefs about yourself or the world that other people would find odd?»

FOCUSED QUESTIONS

- «Do you feel as if other people are trying to harm or control you?»
- «Has anyone in your family ever experienced depression?»
- «Has anyone in your family ever been diagnosed with a mental illness»
- «Would you like to meet with a counselor to help you with your problem?»
- «Would you like to join a support group?» «What do you think makes you feel this way?»
- «Have you lost any interest in your social activities or relationships?»
- «Do you feel hopeless?»
- «Do you feel guilty about anything?»
- «How is your energy level?»
- «Can you still perform your daily functions or activities?» «Whom do you live with?»
- «How do they react to your behavior?»
- «Do you have any problems in your job»
- «How is your performance on your job?»
- «Have you had any recent emotional or financial problems?» «Have you had any recent traumatic event in your family?»

FOCUSED QUESTIONS

Abuse:

- «Are you safe at home?»
- «Is there any threat to your personal safety at home or anywhere else?»
- «Does anyone (your husband/wife/parents/boyfriend) treat you in a way that hurts you or threatens to hurt you?»
- «Can you tell me about the bruises on your arm?»

BASIC ALGORITHM OF PHYSICAL EXAMINATION

Before the Physical Exam

Wash your hands.
Tell the patient what you are going to do.
Ask **permission** to untie the gown.



During the Exam

Keep the exam focused and organized.
Expose as little of the patient's body as you can.
Do not examine through the gown.
Start far from any area of pain.
Do not repeat painful maneuvers.



After the exam

Tie the gown when you are done.

BASIC ALGORITHM OF CLOSURE

Counseling

Briefly summarize the history and physical findings.
Briefly discuss the diagnostic possibilities.
Do not give a definitive diagnosis
Briefly explain the planned diagnostic workup
Avoid complicated medical terms
Ask if the patient has any questions or concerns.



Handling Challenging Questions or Concerns

Be honest but diplomatic
Avoid giving false reassurances.



Before Leaving

Tell the patient that you will meet again with test results
Shake the patient's hand and say goodbye

ANSWERING ON CHALLENGING QUESTIONS

Confidentiality/Ethical Issues

| Challenging Question | Possible Response |
|--|---|
| A patient who needs emergent surgery says, «I can't afford the cost of staying in the hospital. I have no insurance. Just give me something to relieve the pain and I will leave.» | «I know that you are concerned about medical costs, but your life will be in danger if you don't have surgery. Let our social workers help you with the cost issues.» |
| «Should I tell my sexual partner about my venereal disease?» | «Yes. There is a chance that you have already transmitted the disease to your partner, or he or she may be the source of your infection. The most important step is to have both of you evaluated and appropriately treated.» |
| An anxious patient who you suspect has been abused asks, «Why are you asking me these questions?» | «I am primarily concerned about your safety, and my goal is to make sure that you are in a safe environment and that you are not a victim of abuse.» |

ANSWERING ON CHALLENGING QUESTIONS

| Challenging Question | Possible Response |
|--|--|
| A patient recently diagnosed with HIV asks, "Do I have to tell my wife?" | "I know that it's difficult, but doing so will allow you and your wife to take the appropriate precautions to treat and prevent the transmission of the disease." |
| A doorway information sheet indicates that the patient is Mr. Smith and that he presents with dizziness, but when you enter the room, you find a female patient. | Begin by saying, "Excuse me, Mrs. Smith?" When the patient responds, "No, I am Mrs. Black," you can say, "Oh, I think the nurse must have given me the wrong chart. Hello, Mrs. Black. What is your problem?" You can then go on to discuss the patient's presenting complaint, but remember that the vital signs listed on the doorway information sheet are those of a different patient, so you will need to take the patient's vitals during the physical exam |
| A female patient attempts to seduce her male physician by saying, "Doctor, do you have time to have dinner with me at my place?" | "I am sorry, but that would be inappropriate, since you are my patient, and it would not be permissible in the context of a doctor-patient relationship." |

ANSWERING ON CHALLENGING QUESTIONS

Patient Belief/Behavioral Issues

| Challenging Question | Possible Response |
|--|--|
| An elderly male patient says, «I think that it is normal at my age to have this problem" (impotence) or "I am just getting old.» | «Not necessarily. Age may play a role in the change you are experiencing in your sexual function, but your problem may have other causes that we should rule out, such as certain diseases (hypertension, diabetes) or medications. We also have medications that may improve your sexual function.» |
| «I read in a journal that the treatment for this disease is herbal compounds.» | «Herbal medicines have been suggested for many diseases. However, their safety and efficacy may not always be clear-cut. Let me know the name of the herbal medicine and I will check into its potential treatment role for this disease.» |

ANSWERING ON CHALLENGING QUESTIONS

| Challenging Question | Possible Response |
|---|---|
| «I am afraid of surgery.» | «I understand your feelings. It is normal and very common to have these feelings before surgery. Is there anything specific that you are concerned about?» |
| A patient who has a serious problem (unstable angina, colon cancer) asks, «I want to go on a trip with my wife. Can we do the tests after I come back?» | «I know that you don't want to put off your trip, but you may have a serious problem that may benefit from early diagnosis and management. Also, it is possible that you could suffer complications from this problem while you are on vacation if we do not <i>effectively</i> deal with it before you leave.» |
| «I did not understand your question, doctor. Could you repeat it, please?» | Repeat the question slowly. If the patient still doesn't comprehend the question, ask if there is any specific word he failed to understand, and try to explain it or use a simpler one. |
| «What is a bronchoscope?» (MRI, CT, x-ray, colonoscopy) | Explain the meaning of the term using simple words. For example, «Bronchoscope is using a thin tube connected to a camera to look into your respiratory airways and parts of your lungs,» or «An MM is a machine that uses a large magnet to obtain detailed pictures of your brain or body.» |

ANSWERING ON CHALLENGING QUESTIONS

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>«What do you mean by workup?»</p> | <p>2It means all the tests that we are going to do to help us make the final diagnosis.»</p> |
| <p>A patient who is late in seeking medical advice asks, «Do you think it is too late for recovery?»</p> | <p>«It is never too late to seek help, and I am glad you made the decision to pursue treatment options with me. We will do our best to help you, but next time I want you to feel comfortable coming to me as soon as you feel you might have a problem.»</p> |