

EFFECTIVE CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION: QUICK TIPS FOR CLINICAL TRIAL STAFF

Step 1 | Take a cultural awareness self-assessment

Identify and understand your own cultural and professional beliefs, values, and biases. Find assessment tools at: www.nccc.georgetown.edu

Step 2 | Learn about patients' cultures

Respectfully ask patients about their way of life to understand how their values may impact their health care. Here are some example questions:



- Is there anything I should know about your culture or ethnicity that might affect how you participate in this research study?
- What do you hope to learn from being in this study?

Step 3 | Apply strategies for effective cross-cultural communication



Written communication

- Apply health literacy principles – visit www.cdc.gov/ccindex/index.html for guidelines
- Make important materials available in multiple languages
- Use visual models, diagrams, and pictures to illustrate a procedure or condition



Verbal communication

- Communicate in a language most comfortable for the patient
- Avoid medical jargon and technical terms
 - For example, say “by mouth” instead of “oral”
- Use teach-back to confirm understanding
- Encourage patients to ask you questions
 - For example, ask “What questions do you have?” or “What would you like me to repeat?”



Non-verbal behaviors

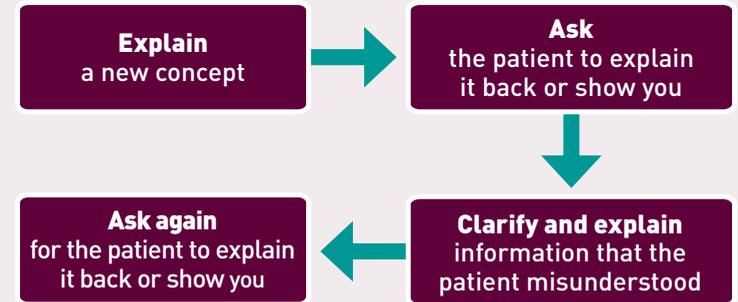
Pay attention to and follow patients' lead on:

- Eye contact
- Silence
- Tone of voice
- Facial expression

TEACH-BACK TECHNIQUE: QUICK TIPS FOR CLINICAL TRIAL STAFF

Step 1 | Explain a new concept

- Organize the information so important points come first
- Break down complex information into chunks
- Use simple, common words instead of medical jargon
- Explain any need-to-know, technical terms using simple language
- Use active voice
 - For example, say “Take this study drug with water” instead of “This study drug should be taken with water”



Step 2 | Ask the patient to explain the information back or show you using their own words

Start with a statement such as, “I’d like to make sure I explained that clearly to you.”

Questions to ask for a teach-back:

- When is the best time for you to take your study drug?
- What side effects are possible from this study drug?
- How will you contact the study staff?

Statements to have them demonstrate an action:

- Tell me in your own words how you’ll take this study drug.
- Please show me how you’ll use the glucose meter.

Step 3 | Clarify and explain information that the patient misunderstood

Clarify and explain the concepts in a different way:

- Use simpler language
- Break up the information into smaller chunks to focus on less information at one time
- When explaining actions that have multiple steps, pause between steps to let the patient ask questions

Step 4 | Ask again for the patient to explain the information back or show you

- Ask open-ended questions until you feel confident the patient understands the information
- Repeat steps 3 and 4 until the patient can correctly tell you in their own words what they are going to do