

https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/HEALTHLITERACY/SOLUTIONS/b33097fb-8e0f-4f8c-b23c-543f80c39ff3/UploadedImages/docs/Teach_Back_-_10_Elements_of_Competence.pdf

10 Elements of Competence for Using Teach-back Effectively

1. Use a caring tone of voice and attitude.
2. Display comfortable body language and make eye contact.
3. Use plain language.
4. Ask the patient to explain back, using their own words.
5. Use non-shaming, open-ended questions.
6. Avoid asking questions that can be answered with a simple yes or no.
7. Emphasize that the responsibility to explain clearly is on you, the provider.
8. If the patient is not able to teach back correctly, explain again and re-check.
9. Use reader-friendly print materials to support learning.
10. Document use of and patient response to teach-back.

What is Teach-back?

I A way to make sure you—the health care provider—explained information clearly. It is not a test or quiz of patients.

I Asking a patient (or family member) to explain in their own words what they need to know or do, in a caring way.

I A way to check for understanding and, if needed, re-explain and check again.

I A research-based health literacy intervention that improves patient-provider communication and patient health outcomes¹

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Schillinger, 2003

<https://www.ahrq.gov/health-literacy/professional-training/shared-decision/tool/resource-6.html>

Teach-back—a useful technique

Every clinician wants to know the most effective way to communicate with patients and their families. It's the first step to helping someone with a health problem. With the teach-back technique, effective clinician-patient communication is assured because patients are asked to "teach back" what they have learned during their visit. Patients use their own words to explain what they need to know about their health, or what they need to do to get better.

Below are some other advantages of the technique:

Helps your patients remember and understand more information^{1,2}

Raises patient satisfaction and helps patients feel more relaxed

Helps you gain your patients' trust

Is not time consuming to implement and can take as little as 1 to 2 minutes³

How to use the teach-back technique with your patients

Check off the strategies you will try.

What To Say⁴

___ Explain things clearly using plain language and avoid using medical jargon and vague directions.

___ Make sure your patients know your goal is to check how well you explained the health information—not to test their knowledge.

___ Encourage your patients to use their own words, rather than copying you or others on your clinical team.

___ Ask open-ended questions that start with "what" or "how" and avoid questions that result in "yes" or "no" answers.

___ When appropriate, ask your patients to show you how to do something, such as how to check their blood pressure or use their inhaler.

How To Say It⁴

___ Speak slowly and make eye contact.

___ Allow your voice and facial expressions to show genuine interest.

___ Use relaxed body language.

When To Use Teach-Back⁴

___ Use teach-back whenever you explain an important concept—such as treatment options, participation in a clinical trial, weighing benefits and risk, or adherence to a treatment plan.

___ Check for comprehension after main points and repeat these points throughout the visit.

Teach-back questions for shared decisionmaking

Try these examples with your patients

"We talked about two treatment options today: watchful waiting and starting radiation in a few weeks. I want to make sure I explained each option clearly. Would you please tell me how you would explain watchful waiting to your family member?"

"I want to make sure I was clear about the pros and cons of taking this medicine. Could you tell me about the possible side effects of the medicine and how it could lower your chance of a heart attack?"

"I want to check how well I explained the treatment options, benefits, and possible harms outlined in this decision aid on osteoporosis. Please tell me, in your own words, about the options we discussed that could help lower your chance of breaking a bone."

Help your patients to understand

Teach-back allows you to see how well you explained or taught health information to your patients. Patients do not mind being asked about their understanding—according to a patient preferences and assessment study.⁵

If a patient does not understand

At times, teach-back may reveal that a patient does not understand what they need to know, or what they need to do.

Steps To Take

Say, "I must not have done a good job explaining. Let me try again."

Explain the health information a second time using a different approach. Create a simple drawing, show a model, or demonstrate the behavior (such as showing how to empty a Foley catheter urine bag).

Use teach-back again to check for comprehension.

Promote a teach-back environment

Besides asking questions, there are other ways to promote teach-back. You can create an atmosphere that invites your patients to take the lead in using it.

Try These Tips

Give your patients the time and opportunity to talk to you.

Make sure all the staff in your office are trained on the technique and are using teach-back correctly.

Post signs that explain teach-back and encourage your patients to use it.

Using teach-back with decision aids

Teach-back is especially important to use with decision aids, such as written materials, videos, and interactive tools. These aids help your patients learn about and evaluate their options so they can make informed choices. After you offer decision aids to your patients, be sure to follow up at the next visit. Use the teach-back technique to make sure your patients used and understood the decision aids.

Start slowly

Remember, adopting new behaviors can take a little time to master. Be patient with yourself. At

first, start out slowly with one or two of your patients a day. Soon you will find teach-back is second nature for you.

http://teachback.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Teach-Back-Toolkit_for-website_Sept-2021.pdf

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What is Teach-back?

Teach-back is a simple and effective way of checking that you have clearly explained information to your patients by confirming that they understand it. Teach-back involves asking patients to explain back what you have just told them in their own words. Any misunderstandings are then clarified by the health provider, and patient understanding is checked again.

Step 1

Use plain language to explain information.

Step 2

Ask the patient to explain what you just told them in their own words.

Step 3

Re-explain anything that is misunderstood.

Step 4

Repeat steps 2 & 3

until the
information is
understood.

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Using teach-back in practice

Teach-back should be used in any situation where it is important that the information given by a health worker is understood by a patient or their carer.

Techniques for using teach-back

Using written or
visual materials

Verbal
information

Your inhaler is important for your health. Can you show me how you would use it at home?

Just so I'm sure I explained your medication correctly, can you tell me when and how much you are going to take?

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Making teach-back part of routine practice

Implementing teach-back throughout a healthcare service may be a significant workflow

change, therefore simply educating staff on how to use

teach-back is not enough to ensure it

is integrated into routine practice successfully. Multiple strategies are needed to effect ongoing

change and support continued use of a new intervention⁶

. These strategies will depend on the

type of practice setting, but may include:

See <http://teachback.org> for more information

Training and education for staff

Techniques include development and distribution of education pamphlets;

use of online education modules; and face-to-face training seminars with

or without role-playing scenarios.

Building a culture of teach-back

This may involve designating “Teach-Back Champions” to guide and

motivate staff to use teach-back; or holding regular team meetings to gain

feedback about using teach-back.

Prompts and reminders

Developing clinical reminders for use of teach-back can involve hanging

posters; leaving notes on whiteboards in patient rooms; or via electronic

prompting (e.g. reminder emails or in patient management systems).

Using evaluation strategies

Developing a quality monitoring system to ensure teach-back is implemented correctly; introducing an audit system for teach-back; or

providing progress reports.

Things to remember

1. Teach-back is NOT a test: Teach-back is a technique to determine a patient’s understanding, not a test of their knowledge.

2. Plan your approach: Think about how you will ask your patients to teach-back the information you have just explained to them.
3. Encourage patients to use their own words: If patients parrot your words back to you, they may not have understood the information correctly.
4. Practice makes perfect: It will take some time, but once it is part of your routine, teach-back can be done without awkwardness and does not lengthen a visit.
5. Take advantage of educational handouts: Use handouts along with teach-back and write down key information to help patients remember instructions at home.
6. Share teach-back stories: Ask one person at each staff meeting to share a teachback story.
7. Start with one patient a day: Try the teach-back method with one patient a day and reflect on what worked/didn't work. Try to increase to two patients a day and so-on.

Overview

It is important to confirm that you have explained things in a manner your patients understand.

The teach-back method is a way of checking understanding by asking patients to state in their own words what they need to know or do about their health. The related show-me method allows you to confirm that patients are able to follow specific instructions, such as how to use an inhaler.

The teach-back and show-me methods are valuable tools for everyone in the practice to use

with all patients. These methods can help you:

Improve patient understanding and adherence.

Decrease call backs and cancelled appointments.

Improve patient satisfaction and outcomes.

Practice Experiences

"One of our residents decided to do her QI [quality improvement] project on using teach-back.

Since people were worried that teach-back would take more time, she collected data that

showed her average visit length decreased as she practiced teach-back, and was shorter than

other residents who were not using teach-back. She also gathered data showing that patients

who got teach-back were more satisfied than patients who did not. Then she spread teach-back to her colleagues."

—Pediatric residency practice

checking how well you

explained something, not testing the patient. For example, you could say,

"We've gone over a lot of information, and I want to make sure I explained things clearly. So tell

me, what do you think are the three most important things to know about diabetes?"

"When you get home, what will you tell your partner about this visit?"

"I want to make sure I've done my job well and explained things clearly. If you will tell me back

the plan we've made, I'll type it up and send it home with you."

TIP

Clinicians are often worried that they do not have time to use clear communication strategies.

Invite skeptics to watch this video of Dr. Clifford Coleman using many of these strategies in a 15-minute visit. Do not ask questions that can be answered with a "yes" or "no." "Do you understand?" and "Does that make sense?" are NOT teach-back questions. Patients are likely to answer "yes" whether they understand or not.

Use the show-me method. When prescribing new medicines or changing a dose, research shows that even when patients correctly say when and how much medicine they will take, many will make mistakes when asked to demonstrate the dose. You could say, for example: "I've noticed that many people have trouble remembering how to take their blood thinner. Using these pills, can you show me how you are going to take them?" Remember teach-back is not a test of patients' memory. You can allow patients to refer to handouts when asking for a teach-back, but make sure they use their own words and are not reading the material back verbatim. Refer to Tool 12: Use Health Education Material Effectively for more information on reviewing written materials to reinforcing patients' understanding.

Clarify and check again. If teach-back uncovers a misunderstanding, explain things using a

different approach, and ask patients to teach-back again. Repeat the cycle of reteaching and asking for a teach-back until they are able to describe the information in their own words correctly. If they parrot your words back to you, they may not have understood.

"Chunk and Check." Do not wait until the end of the visit to initiate teach-back. Chunk out information into small segments and have your patient teach it back. Then move on to the next segment and repeat as needed throughout the visit.

Start slowly and use consistently. At first, you may want to try teach-back with the last patient of the day. Once you are comfortable with the technique, use teach-back with everyone, every time.

Practice. It will take a little time, but once it is part of your routine, teach-back can be done without awkwardness and does not lengthen a visit.

Practice Experiences

"I decided to do teach-back on five patients. With one mother and her child, I concluded the visit by saying 'So tell me what you are going to do when you get home.' ... She could not tell me what instructions I had just given her. I explained the instructions again and then she was able to teach them back to me.... I had no idea she did not understand.... I was so wrapped up in delivering the message that I did not realize it wasn't being received."

—Pediatric office