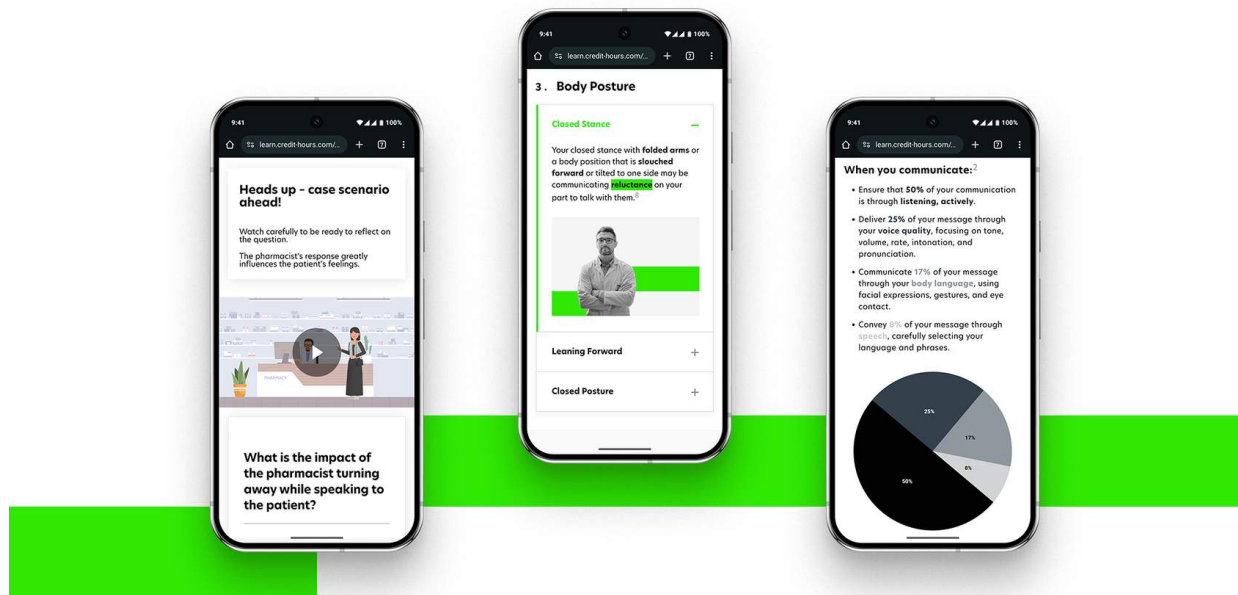


***Building Trust and Empathy in Pharmacy Practice for Better Health Outcomes**

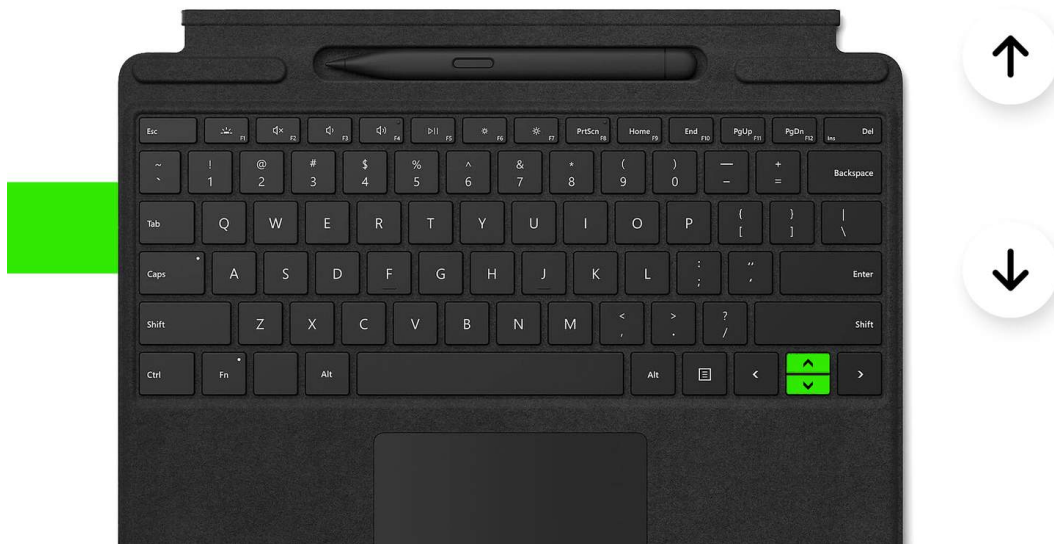
Welcome!



Welcome to this e-learning module on developing communication skills to build trust, show empathy, and enhance patient interactions in pharmacy practice. This module should take 30-45 minutes to complete.



This module requires you to often interact with different elements in some sections, while paying attention to case-presentation scenarios in others.



To navigate from one section to another, you can scroll up and down using your cursor, arrows on your keyboard, or by swiping up and down.

Building Emotional Bonds Through Trust and Empathy in Pharmacy Practice



As we've discussed previously, your role goes beyond **dispensing** medications, you have the power to **build trust** and create **meaningful** connections. By showing genuine **empathy** and establishing **trust**, you can transform a routine interaction into a positive and supportive experience.

Let's see how to **strengthen** emotional bonds with your patients, ensuring they feel heard, valued, and confident in your care.

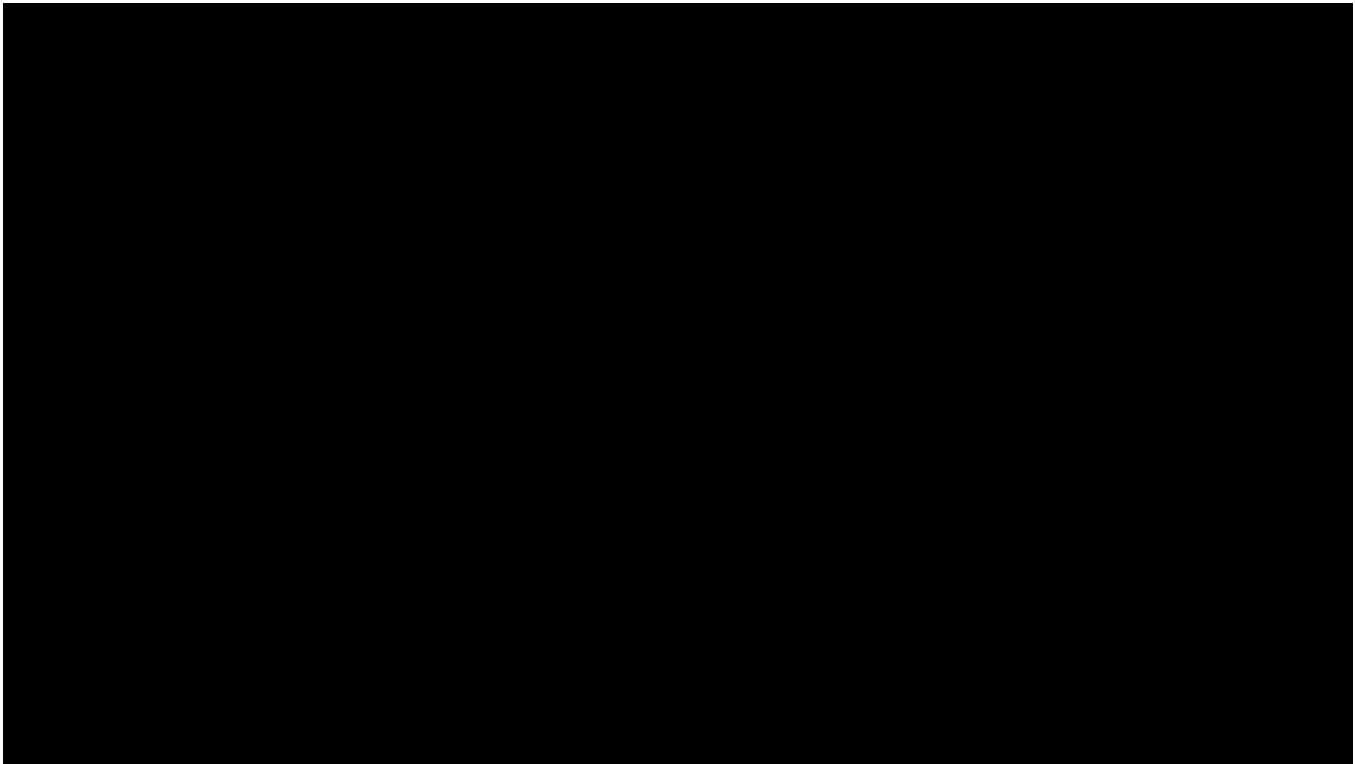
CONTINUE



Hello, I'm Dr. Adam, a community pharmacist.

In this scenario, a woman in her early 30s visits my pharmacy seeking relief for her migraine.

Watch closely to see how my responses help build an emotional bond and address her concerns effectively!



In this scene, how could the pharmacist establish an emotional bond and build trust with the patient?

- ☐ By recognizing the patient's distress and responding with empathy before discussing treatment options.
- ☐ By immediately offering a medication suggestion without acknowledging the patient's feelings.

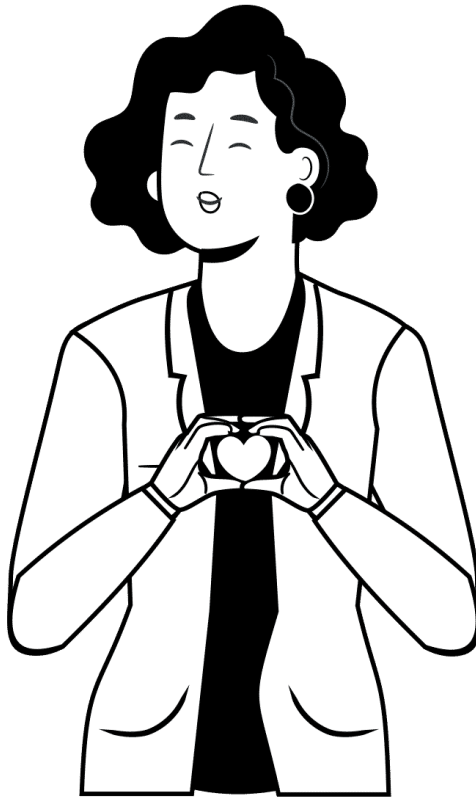
SUBMIT

The Power of Trust in Pharmacy Practice

Trust is **key** to better health outcomes. When your patient especially who is in pain trust you, they are more likely to:¹

- Take their medications **correctly** as prescribed.
- Follow your **instructions**.
- Experience **fewer** medication errors and better disease management.

A large black and white line drawing of a clipboard. It has a rectangular clip at the top. The main body of the clipboard contains a checklist with four rows. Each row consists of a square checkbox with a white checkmark inside, followed by a horizontal rounded rectangle for text input.



The Power of Empathy in Pharmacy Practice

When you show **empathy**, your patient who is in pain, feel heard and understood. This helps to:²

- **Reduce** their **anxiety**.
- **Increase** their **confidence** in their treatment.
- **Encourage** them to **share** their concerns openly with you.



As a pharmacist, your role is to **engage** in **person-centered care** (**PCC**). This approach helps **boost** patients' **confidence** in **managing** their conditions, makes them feel supported, and **strengthens** their trust in their treatment plans.^{3, 4}

Before going into further details

Let's talk about your role as a **trusted source** of support.

CONTINUE

Scene 1 Slide 1

Continue → Next Slide

PCC is an approach that **prioritizes** your unique **needs**, **preferences**, and **goals**, focusing on your overall **well-being** rather than just treating your **condition**.³⁻⁵

CONTINUE

Scene 1 Slide 2

Continue → Next Slide

We call it person-centered **instead of** patient-centered because it focuses on your **patient** as a **whole person**—valuing **your voice, dignity, and choices**—not just treating you as someone who is sick.^{3, 4}

CONTINUE

Scene 1 Slide 3

Continue → Next Slide

START OVER



Scene 1 Slide 4

Continue → End of Scenario

The Four Principles of PCC in Pharmacist-led Therapy

Empathy and Understanding

Take the time to **listen** and **acknowledge** your patient concerns.^{4, 6, 7}

Shared Decision-making

Involve your patients in treatment **choices** and **respect** their preferences.^{4, 6, 7}

Individualized Care

Adapt treatment plans to their unique **cultural, social, and personal** needs.^{4, 6, 7}

Clear Communication

Use **simple, easy-to-understand** language.^{4, 6, 7}

CONTINUE

The Power of Trust in Pharmacy Practice



Trust is the **cornerstone** of every successful pharmacist-patient interaction. But trust isn't given—it's earned through **consistent actions** that demonstrate **competence, honesty, empathy, and respect**.

Now, you'll explore the **key elements** of trust and practical strategies to build and maintain it in your daily practice.



In this scenario, the patient seeks reassurance about managing their migraines.

Observe closely to see how my guidance can greatly influence the patient's comfort in managing her condition.



Why did the pharmacist listen actively, provide practical solutions like a notebook, and reassure the patient?

- ☐ To save time and avoid lengthy conversations.
- ☐ To build trust, empower the patient, and create a supportive environment.

SUBMIT

Let's take a closer look at the **core elements of building trust in pharmacy practice!**



1. Competence in Knowledge

- As a healthcare professional, you must stay up to date with the latest knowledge and advancements in your field.⁸
-



2. Competence in Communication

- You need to communicate effectively, both verbally and non-verbally, to build trust with your patients.
- Active listening, showing empathy, and adapting to each patient's unique needs are essential for fostering trust.⁸



3. Honesty

- You must always act ethically and prioritize your patients' best interests to maintain credibility.⁸
-
-



4. Confidentiality

- Protecting your patient privacy is free of compromise, crucial for maintaining trust, and ensuring patients feel safe to share their information freely.⁸
-
-



5. Respect and Caring

- You should always demonstrate compassion and respect for cultural diversity in your practice.
 - Upholding patient dignity is key to strengthening your professional relationships and building trust.⁸
-

CONTINUE

The Power of Empathy in Pharmacy Practice



Traditionally, you were trained to **prioritize** patient **counseling** and **instruction**. When you focus on **empathetic** communication, you build **stronger** relationships with your patients who are in pain, improve their **adherence**, and ultimately improve healthcare **outcomes**.⁵

Let's explore the **difference** between empathy, sympathy, and compassion in pharmacy practice, offering **strategies** to build rapport, enhance patient **trust**, and overcome **challenges** in

compassionate care for better health outcomes.



In this scenario, by demonstrating empathy and compassion, I help manage the patient's condition effectively.

Notice how my use of empathetic questioning and clear communication helps gather important details about the patient's migraine, ensuring a more informed and supportive recommendation.



During the pharmacist's conversation with the patient, how could we say that true empathy was demonstrated?

- ☐ The pharmacist maintained eye contact, acknowledged the patient's emotions, provided personalized advice, and reassured her of ongoing support while considering her specific concerns.
- ☐ The pharmacist provided information about migraine treatments in a professional tone, explained the medication's mechanism of action, and encouraged the patient to follow the recommended regimen.

SUBMIT

What is the difference between Sympathy, Empathy, and Compassion?



Sympathy

(I understand your pain)

The ability to understand what another person is feeling without necessarily sharing or experiencing those feelings.⁵



Empathy

(I **feel** your pain)

The ability to understand and share another person's feelings or experiences by imagining yourself in their situation.⁵



Compassion

(I **want to relieve** your pain)

A response to empathy that involves taking action to relieve another's suffering, driven by a genuine desire to help and support them.⁵



While sympathy allows for understanding, empathy helps you to connect with patients in pain on a deeper level, and compassion drives them to take action to support and improve patient well-being.

Effective Demonstration of Empathy and Compassion

In order to effectively demonstrate **empathy** and **compassion**, you need to:

- 1 Establish initial rapport
- 2 Establish the reason for the consultation
- 3 End the consultation

1. Establish Initial Rapport



Rapport is the establishment of a **mutual understanding and connection** between individuals, characterized by **respect, acceptance, empathy**, and a **shared commitment** to the relationship.⁹

This could happen by:



Greeting the Patient

Smile, introduce yourself, 'Hello, my name is...'⁵



Using Open Body Language

Make eye contact and lean forward slightly to show attentiveness.⁵

2. Establish the Reason for the Consultation

Step 1

Use Open-ended Questions

Use open questions and show you are interested in what your patient has to say.⁵

💬 "What would you like to discuss today?"

Step 2

Active Listening

Take time to listen to the patient, reiterating what the patient has said in your own words.⁵

💬 "It sounds like you're concerned that the pain killer might be causing side effects. Let's go over your symptoms together."

Step 3

Respect Your Patient

Respect patient views, opinions, beliefs and feelings – avoid being judgmental.⁵

💬 "I understand your concern. Let's explore options that fit your preferences while ensuring your treatment is effective."

Step 4

Acknowledge Sensitive Topics

Address sensitive subjects with empathy.⁵

✗ "I know how you feel" as it may provoke a negative response.

✓ "I can see this is difficult for you".

Step 5

Show a Friendly and Welcoming Attitude

Use body language and posture that matches the patient's feelings to create a supportive environment and avoid interruption.⁵

Patient: "I've been experiencing headaches, and I think it started after I..."

❌ (Pharmacist interrupts): "It's probably because of dehydration."

✅ Let the patient finish speaking before responding.

3. End the Consultation

- **Summarize** key points: "Just to recap, you mentioned..."
- Offer **follow-up support**: "Would it help if I checked in with you next week?"⁵





While pharmacists strive to demonstrate empathy and compassion, various challenges can make this difficult. Let's explore these challenges.

CONTINUE

Challenges to Providing Compassionate Care in Pharmacy Practice

Providing compassionate care is at the **heart** of pharmacy practice, but it often comes with **significant challenges** such as:

1

Your workplace pressures challenges



Your Patient's challenges

① Your Workplace Pressures Challenges



Lack of Time

- You're often handling a heavy workload, like managing a high turnover of prescriptions.⁵



Organizational Pressure

- You're expected to meet high targets, such as completing medicine use reviews or providing new medicine services.⁵



Imbalance in Staffing and Workload Distribution

- Low staffing levels can make things harder.⁵

② Your Patient's Challenges

LANGUAGE BARRIERS

LACK OF KNOWLEDGE

DISABILITIES

CULTURAL BARRIERS

Communication challenges when you and your patient don't speak the same language.⁵



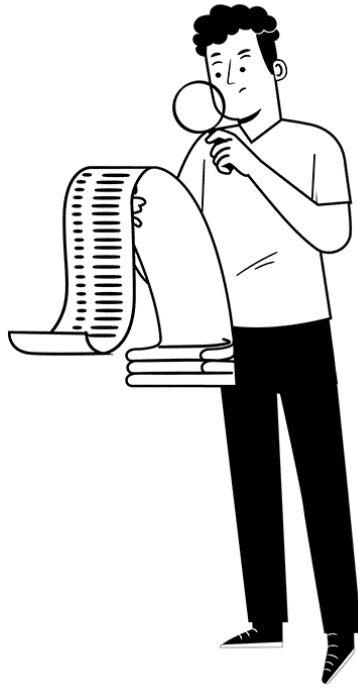
LANGUAGE BARRIERS

LACK OF KNOWLEDGE

DISABILITIES

CULTURAL BARRIERS

- **Poor health literacy.**
- Lack of understanding of **medical jargon**.⁵



LANGUAGE BARRIERS

LACK OF
KNOWLEDGE

DISABILITIES

CULTURAL BARRIERS

- **Hearing impairments, muteness, or blindness** can make communication **difficult**.
- Patients with **learning disabilities** may need **extra** support.⁵



LANGUAGE BARRIERS

LACK OF
KNOWLEDGE

DISABILITIES

CULTURAL BARRIERS

- Some patients have **different** health beliefs and behaviors.
- **Gender-related views** may influence how they perceive healthcare for example: Some patients may prefer a healthcare provider of the same gender due to cultural or religious reasons.⁵



③ Your Challenges as a Pharmacist

Checklist-style Communication

- ✓ Ensures completeness but may **miss** patient **concerns**.

✗ Focus on **understanding**, **not** just ticking boxes.⁵

Advice-Giving vs. Consulting

✗ Over-relying on **advice-giving** can make your patient feels dismissed.

✓ **Engage** your patient in **discussions** and **explore** options.⁵

Respecting Patient Knowledge

✗ Assuming **limited** knowledge—it may feel **disrespectful**.

✓ Ask **open**-ended questions to assess understanding.⁵

Lack of Confidence

- If you're not confident, it can be tough to discuss **sensitive** or **embarrassing** issues with patients.⁵

CONTINUE

Building Trust and Empathy Across Diverse Patients



Every patient brings a **unique** set of **experiences**, **needs**, and **perspectives**, shaped by their age, abilities, personality, and background. As healthcare professionals, it's essential to **adapt** your communication style to meet these **diverse needs**, ensuring every patient feels heard, respected, and cared for.

Let's explore how to **tailor** your approach to meet the needs of diverse audiences effectively.



As we continue our cases, in this scenario, a male patient in his mid-60s with low back pain, who uses a wheelchair, visits my pharmacy seeking relief.

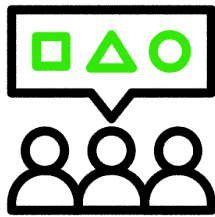
Observe how I build trust and empathy by recognizing the patient's unique challenges, offering personalized support, and focusing on their abilities rather than limitations.



How did the pharmacist empower the older patient in the wheelchair while addressing their back pain?

- ☐ By offering choices, providing clear explanations, and tailoring recommendations to improve their comfort.
- ☐ By taking over all decisions and following a standard protocol for back pain.

SUBMIT



In this part, you'll explore the practical strategies to connect with patients across different **age groups**, **abilities**, and **personality types**. You'll also discover how to support **caregivers and family members**, who play a critical role in patient care.

Communication with Different Age Groups

Older Patients





- When interacting with older patients, **avoid** using ageist terms like '**elderly**'. Instead, use respectful terms like '**older people**' or '**over 65**.'¹⁰



- Speak **clearly** and **respectfully**, and don't assume cognitive decline.
- Treat them with the **same** dignity and attention you would give to any **other** patient.¹⁰

Children



1. Establish Connection

- Make **eye contact**, **smile**, and adjust **tone** appropriately.^{11,}

12

- *Example:* "Hi, Alex! I see you brought your teddy—what's their name?"
-



2. Create Comfort & Trust

- Use a **child-friendly environment** and **engage** in small talk.^{11, 12}

- *Example:* "I see you like football! Have you been too tired to play lately?"
-



3. Involve Them in Conversations

- Speak to the **child first**, then involve **parents**.^{11, 12}

- *Example:* "What's the worst part about feeling sick today?"



4. Shared Decision-Making

- **Offer choices** and **explain** treatments **simply**.^{11, 12}

- *Example:* “We have two ways to help—let’s see which one works best for you.”
-

Communication with People with Disabilities



Wheelchair bound

When interacting with someone who uses a wheelchair, focus on their abilities, not their limitations.¹⁰

✓ Say 'wheelchair user'.

✗ Avoid saying 'wheelchair bound'.

A disabled person


✓ Always use respectful and inclusive language.

✗ Avoid outdated or offensive terms like 'invalid' or 'handicapped'.¹⁰

Communication with Different Personality Types

Step 1

Worried Patient

 Use a **calm** and **reassuring** tone.

 Provide clear, **step-by-step** information and **avoid** medical jargon.¹³

Example:

"I see that you're concerned about the side effects of this medication. That's completely understandable. Let me go through the common side effects and how we can manage them together."

Step 2

Angry Patient

💡 Stay **calm** and listen **without** interrupting.

💡 **Don't** take their anger **personally**. Offer a solution instead of dismissing their concerns.^{14, 15}


Example:

"I understand that waiting for your prescription has been frustrating. Let me check the status and see how we can speed things up for you."

Step 3

Talkative Patient

 Stay **patient** but **focused**.

 **Acknowledge** their concerns while gently steering the conversation back to the main topic.


 Use **closed-ended questions** to control the conversation efficiently.¹⁶

Example:

"I appreciate your insights! Just to make sure I address your main concern, are you asking about the correct dosage of your medication?"

Step 4

Silent Patient

 Use **open-ended questions** to encourage conversation and give them time to respond without rushing.

 Use **non-verbal cues** like gentle nodding and warm eye contact.

 If they prefer, provide **written information**.¹⁶

Example:

"I understand that this might be new information. Do you have any concerns about your medication that I can help with?"

Communication with Family Members or Caregivers

1. Acknowledge the Caregiver's Role and Stress —

- **Recognize** their effort and emotional toll.^{5, 17}
 - **Example:** "I see that you're doing a lot for your loved one. It must be overwhelming at times."
- **Acknowledge** their challenges **without** judgment.^{5, 17}
 - **Example:** "Managing medications can be complicated. How are you coping with it?"

2. Actively Listen and Provide a Safe Space for Expression —

- Use **open-ended** questions.^{5, 17}
 - **Example:** "What concerns do you have about your loved one's medications?"
- Allow **pauses** for them to share their emotions **without** interruption.^{5, 17}
- Use **non-verbal cues** (nodding, eye contact) to show understanding.^{5, 17}

3. Educate without Overwhelming —

- **Explain** medications in **simple terms**, avoiding complex medical jargon.^{5, 17}
 - **Example:** "This medication helps control blood pressure by relaxing the blood vessels."
- Offer **written** instructions or medication schedules for easy reference.^{5, 17}
 - **Example:** "Can you show me how you would explain this medication schedule to your loved one?"

4. Offer Practical Solutions and Resources —

- Suggest **time-saving strategies**, such as medication synchronization or home delivery services.^{5, 17}
- Inform them about **support groups** or **community resources**.^{5, 17}
 - **Example:** "Many caregivers find support groups helpful. Would you like information on one nearby?"

- Discuss **self-care**.^{5, 17}
 - **Example:** "Caring for yourself is important too. Do you get time to rest?"

5. Foster Trust Through Compassionate Follow-ups —

- Express **ongoing support**.^{5, 17}
 - **Example:** "If you ever have concerns, please feel free to reach out. We're here to help."

CONTINUE

In Summary

- Effective communication is essential for pharmacists to build trust, improve adherence, and enhance patient satisfaction.
- Empathy, active listening, and clear explanations help pharmacists provide person-centered care.
- Adapting communication styles to different patient needs ensures better understanding and engagement.

- Addressing patient concerns with professionalism and confidence strengthens pharmacist-patient relationships.
- Overcoming communication barriers leads to improved health outcomes and a positive healthcare experience.

Take-home Message

- **Communicate clearly, listen actively, and show empathy to build trust with patients.**
- **Involve patients in decisions, respect their needs, and personalize your approach.**
- **Stay competent, be honest, and educate patients for better health outcomes.**

Congratulations!

You've **successfully completed** this e-learning module.



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