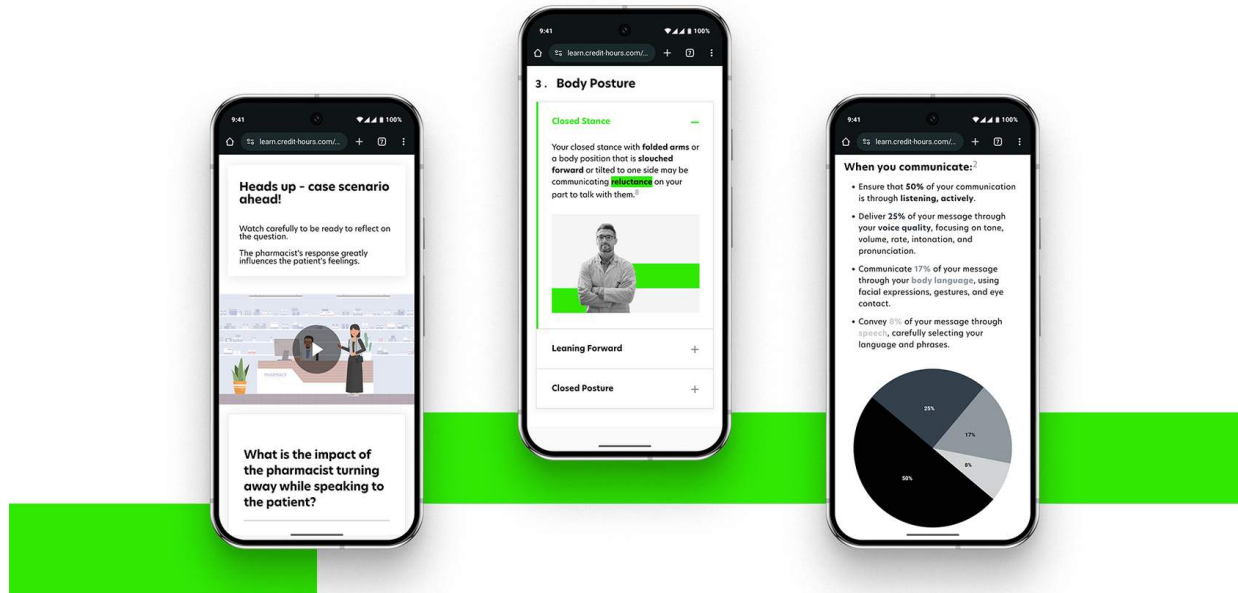


[Pre-Final] Elevating Pharmacy Practice: The Power of Effective Verbal and Non-verbal Communication

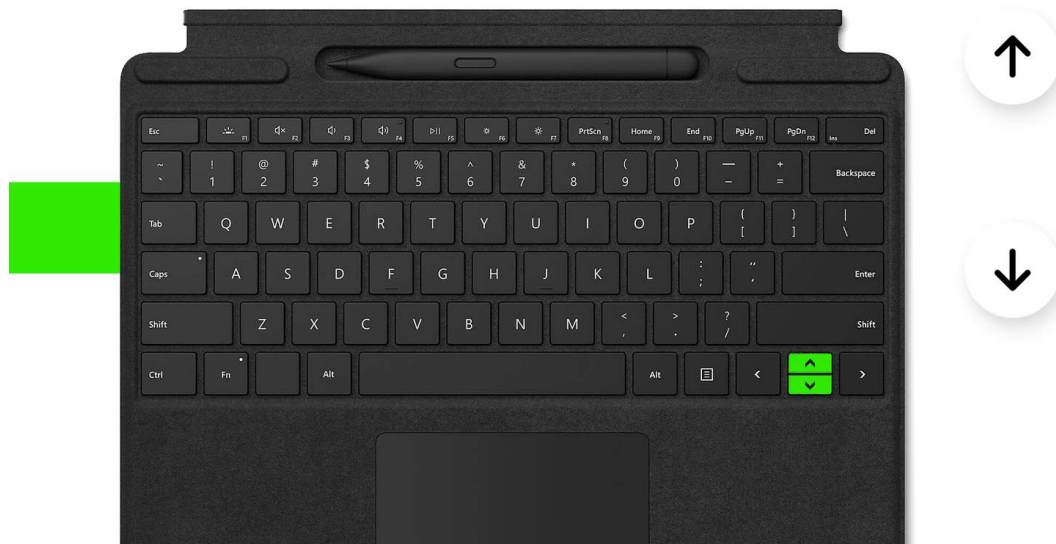
Welcome!



Welcome to this e-learning module on communication skills 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.

Verbal and Non-verbal Communication Skills in Pharmacy Practice



Incorporating both verbal and non-verbal **communication skills** into daily practice allows pharmacists to create a more **supportive** and **effective** healthcare environment.

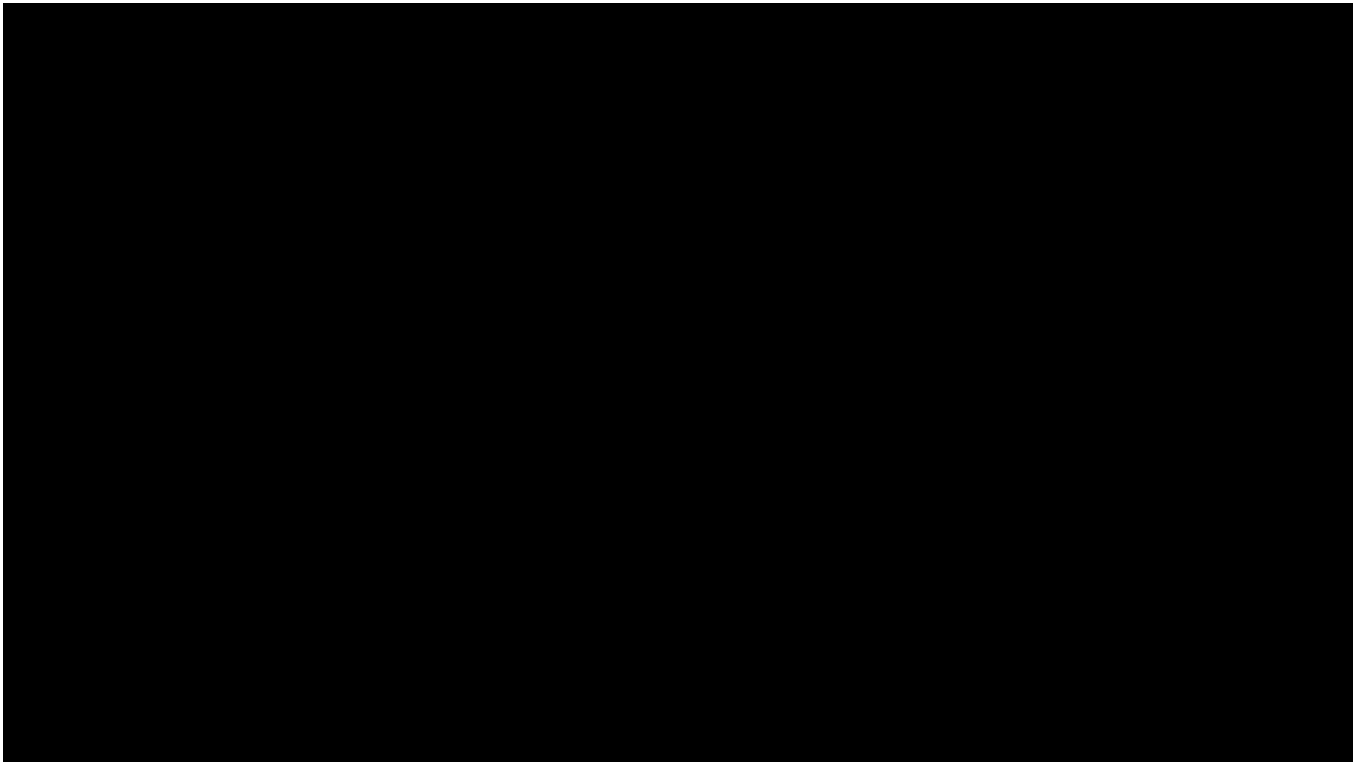
Let's see how effective **verbal** and **non-verbal** communication skills can transform patient interactions and lead to **better outcomes** in a pharmacy setting.



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

In this scenario, a patient visits my
pharmacy seeking relief for their
abdominal pain (Abdominal
cramps due to period pain).

Observe closely to see how my
responses influence the patient's
reactions!



What is the impact of the pharmacist turning away while speaking to the patient?

- ☐ It conveys a sense of urgency to help the patient.
- ☐ It could make the patient feel ignored or less important.

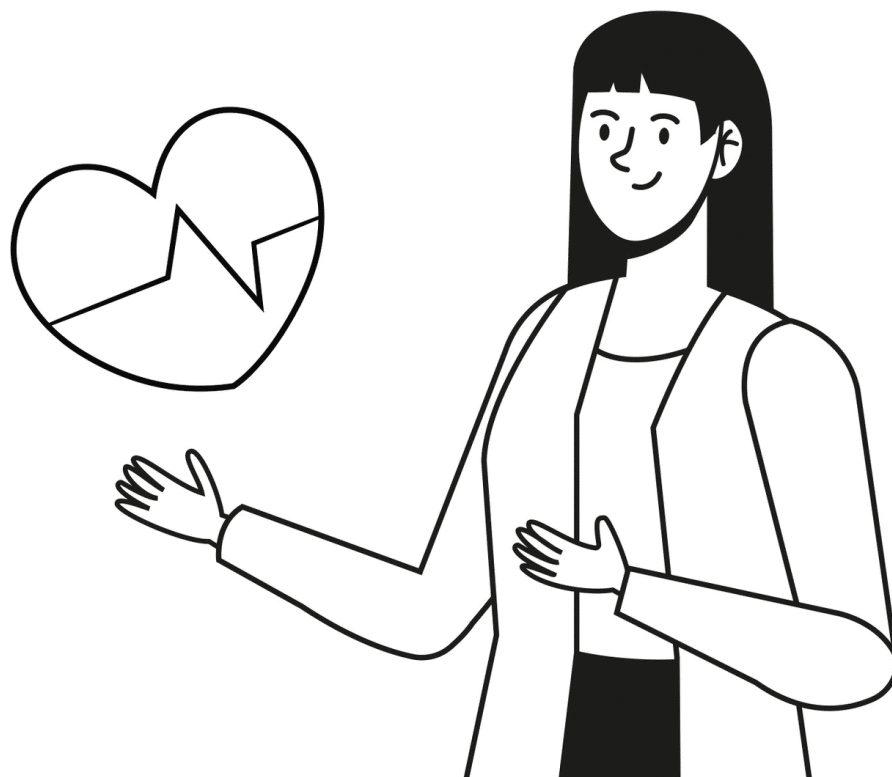
SUBMIT

To ensure your patient doesn't feel ignored and hesitant, it's essential that you **communicate effectively**.

In your pharmacy practice, communication occurs in various forms, such as **verbal** and **non-verbal**.¹

Verbal Communication

To be good at verbal communication, you need to develop essential skills – such as the ability to **listen, understand**, and **respond** to what people say, in a way that encourages continued interaction.¹



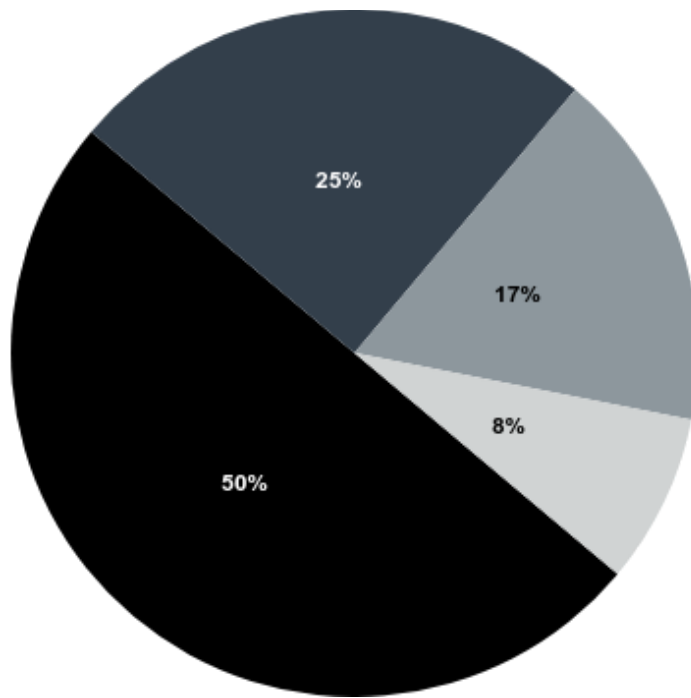
Non-verbal Communication

While in non-verbal communication, you need your **message** through your **body language**, **personality**, and **tone of voice**.¹

Let's break it down and see how each element can help you convey your ideas effectively.

When you communicate:²

- Ensure that **50%** of your communication is through **listening, actively**.
- Deliver **25%** of your message through your **voice quality**, focusing on tone, volume, rate, intonation, and pronunciation.
- Communicate **17%** of your message through your **body language**, using facial expressions, gestures, and eye contact.
- Convey **8%** of your message through **speech**, carefully selecting your language and phrases.



- Active Listening
- Voice Quality
- Body Language
- Speech

CONTINUE

Verbal Communication

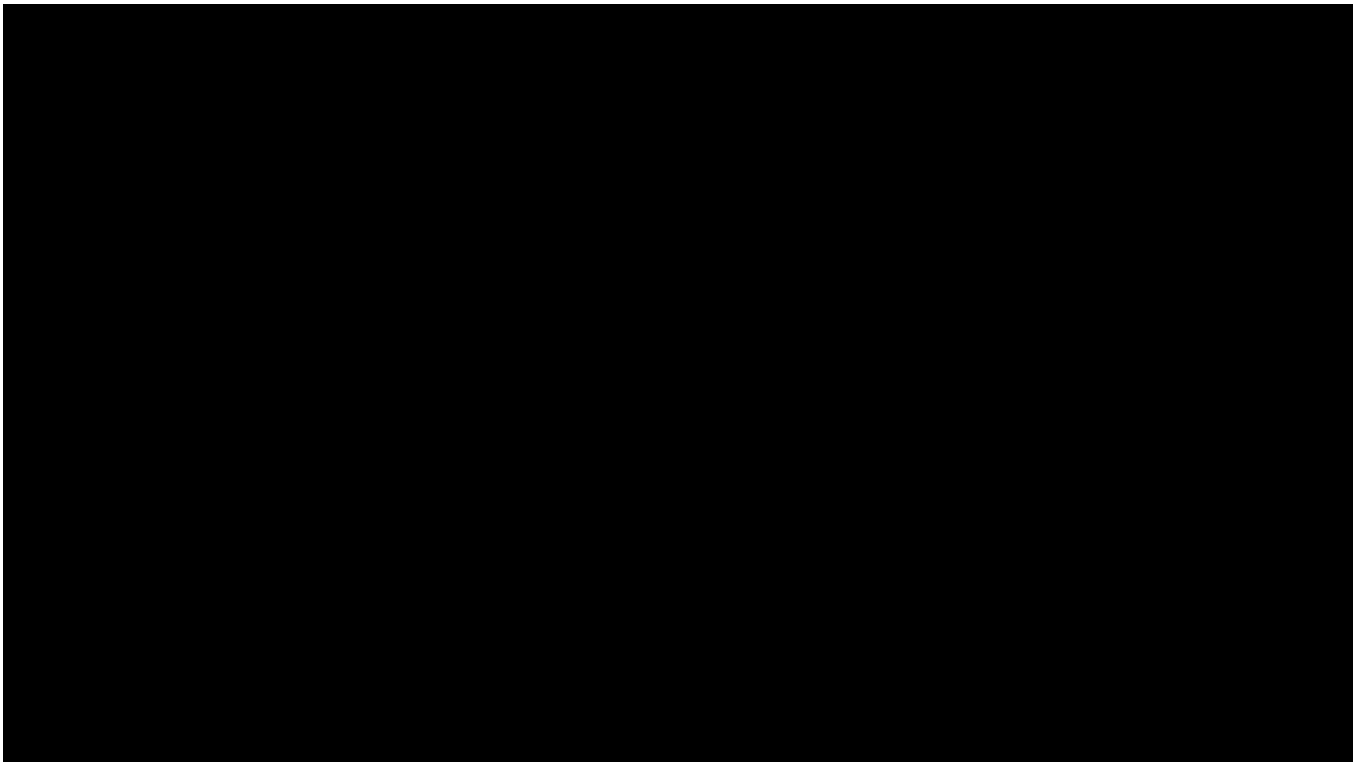


Verbal Communication is the most frequent form of **interaction** you need to have with your patients.³



In this scenario, the patient seeks reassurance about the medication's safety.

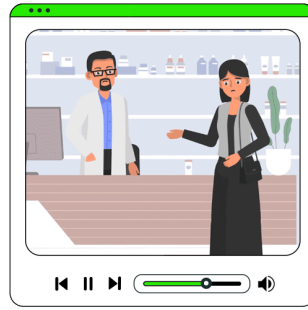
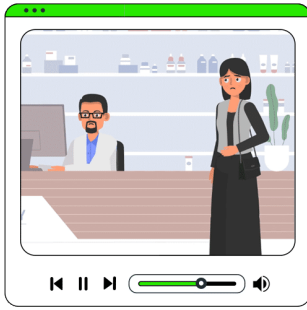
Watch how the conversation unfolds as they reveal additional concerns, highlighting the importance of thorough patient counseling.



In this scenario, how can the pharmacist communicate in a way that shows understanding?

- ☐ "So, you're concerned about how pain relievers might affect your birth control pills."
- ☐ "So, you have some questions about these medications. Do they affect each other?"

SUBMIT



In this scenario, the pharmacist's ineffective communication, marked by **poor listening** and **closed-ended questions**, led to **misunderstanding** about medication safety, patient uncertainty, and potential misuse.

Additionally, the pharmacist missed crucial details about **the patient's condition**, risking **misdiagnosis** and **incorrect treatment**.

Let's take a closer look at **verbal communication**, which includes:

- ① Active Listening
- ② Effective Speech

CONTINUE

① Active Listening

Active listening is the practice of **listening to understand** what someone is saying.³

Build your communication on active listening. Which requires you to **focus fully** on your patient to accurately see the world as they see it.⁴





Pay Attention

Give your **full, undivided attention** to your patient, ensuring you are not distracted, interrupted, or rushed.⁴



Show Understanding

Respond to your patient in a way that shows you have **heard and understood** them.⁴

There are 3 types of active listening responses:

A Restatement Response

A restatement response **repeats** the words of your patient as you have heard them.

For example:
Patient: *"I've been feeling really tired and stressed out lately."*

Pharmacist: "You've been
feeling tired and stressed out."

1 of 3

A Reflective Response

A reflective response
verbalizes both the content
and the feelings of your
patient. This shows the
pharmacist is hearing both
the words and the emotions
behind them.

Begin with phrases such as

2 of 3

A Clarifying Response

A clarifying response
verbalizes both content and
feelings and also
summarizes or **simplifies**
your patient's statements
into clear, concise
statements.

Begin with a phrase such as:

"As I understand it, your

CONTINUE

② Effective Speech

Effective speech is defined as speaking in a way that ensures your message is **clearly heard** and **understood**.⁵

Remember, the **words** you choose can have a **profound impact**, especially when communicating with **patients dealing with pain**.⁶

Key points to remember when choosing your words:

Step 1

Don't Use Negative Phrases

They unintentionally cause **harm** or **misunderstanding**.⁶

✗ "You always complain about your pain."

✓ "I understand that your pain is really challenging for you."

Step 2

Focus on Encouraging Phrases

Words of **encouragement** can **uplift** and **motivate** your patients, making them feel supported and understood.⁶

✓ "You're doing a great job managing your pain. I'm here to support you."

Step 3

Avoid Dismissive Language

Phrases that **minimize** their pain or suggest it's all in their head can be **hurtful**. Always **acknowledge their pain** as real and significant.⁶

✗ "It's all in your head."

✓ "I believe you when you say you're in pain. Let's find a way to manage it together."

Step 4

Tailor Your Language to Their Needs

Each person's **experience with pain** is **unique**. Pay attention to how they describe their pain and mirror that language to show **understanding**.⁶



If they describe their pain as "burning",



Try saying "I hear that you're experiencing a burning sensation. Let's see what we can do to alleviate that."

Step 5

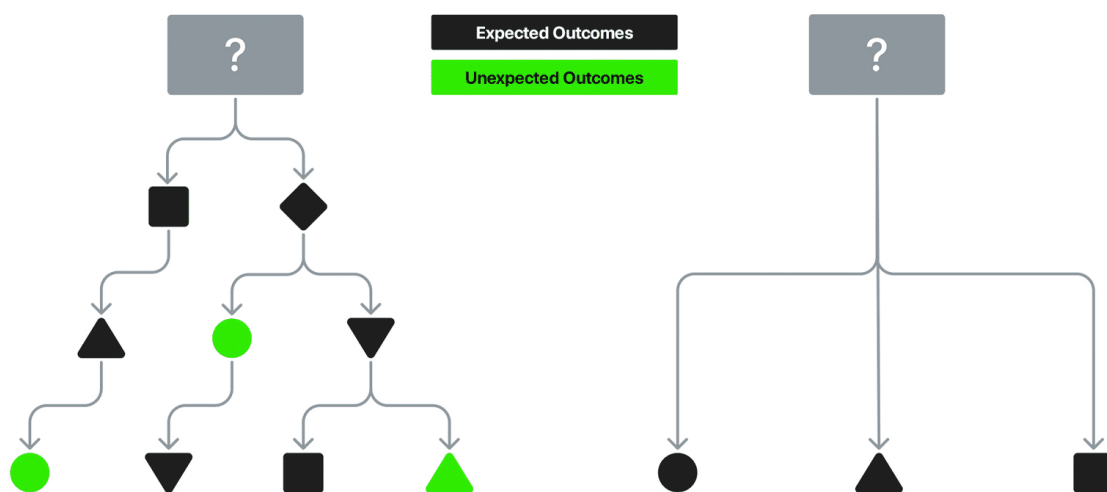
Be Mindful of Their Perspective

Pain can alter a person's **mood** and **responses**. Choose words that are **sensitive** to their current state of mind.⁶

✓ "I know that dealing with chronic pain can be really tough. I'm here to listen and help in any way I can."

Encouraging your patients to **actively participate** through **effective questioning** can influence their **satisfaction and decisions** regarding treatment adherence.⁴

Open-ended Questions V.S. Closed-ended Questions



Early in the conversation, keep questions **open-ended**.⁴

Further into the conversation, **closed-ended questions** may be appropriate to gain **more precise information**.⁴

Open-ended questions are ones that cannot be answered “yes”, or “no”.⁴

- An example of an open-ended question might be:
“Describe how you have been taking your medication?”.

- For example:
“Have you been taking one tablet twice daily?”.

Why Open-ended Questions?

By asking open-ended questions, you **encourage** your patient to open up about their **history** and **pain experience**.⁷



When discussing pain with your patient, focus on the following areas:⁷



Location

- “Where does your pain hurt?”



Duration/Onset

- “When did your pain start?”
- “Do you have any ideas about what might have caused it?”



Intensity

- “How would you rate the pain?” (*Use a rating scale to assess the level of pain*).



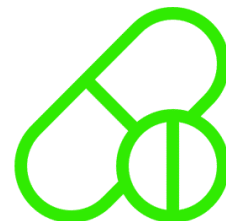
Description of Pain

- “Can you describe what the pain feels like?”



Impact on Day-to-day Life

- “Over the past two weeks, do you think your pain has



Previous Treatment

- “What have you tried previously?”

- “Does it feel like a dull ache or sharp, stabbing pain?”

been bad enough to interfere with your day-to-day activities?”

- “Over the past two weeks, have you felt worried or low in mood because of this pain?”
- “How does it make you feel?”

- “Do you think this helped?”
- “How frequently are you using it?”

You can **encourage** your patients to **share information** by using methods such as the **TED** and **ICE** principles.⁷

T

Can you **tell** me why you have come into the pharmacy today?

E

Can you **explain** who the medicine is for, and what the problem is?

D

Please **describe** your symptoms and how long you have had them?

I

What are your **ideas** about
what may have caused it?

C

What is your **concern**?

E

What were your **expectations** from your visit to the pharmacy?



Although exact questions do not need to be used prescriptively, these should act as a guide when asking patients open-ended questions.⁷

Why Closed-ended Questions?

Closed-ended questions can be used towards the **end** of your consultation to **gather** any specific points that may have been missed.⁷

For example: "Do you have difficulty swallowing the tablet?"

Here Are a Few Tips

That emphasize the importance of **using questioning effectively** in your speech.

CONTINUE

Scene 1 Slide 1

Continue → Next Slide

The Rate of Questioning is Important

If you move through your questions or instructions **too quickly**, your patient may become **confused**, **tune-out**, or **misunderstand** what is asked.⁴

CONTINUE

Scene 1 Slide 2

Continue → Next Slide

This Can Result in Gathering Inaccurate Information

Or even **inappropriate** use of medication once your patient returns home.⁴

CONTINUE

Scene 1 Slide 3

Continue → Next Slide

As well, Ensure You're Not Asking More Than One Question at a Time!

Allow your patients to **respond to each question** at their own pace.⁴

CONTINUE

Scene 1 Slide 4

Continue → Next Slide

START OVER



Scene 1 Slide 5

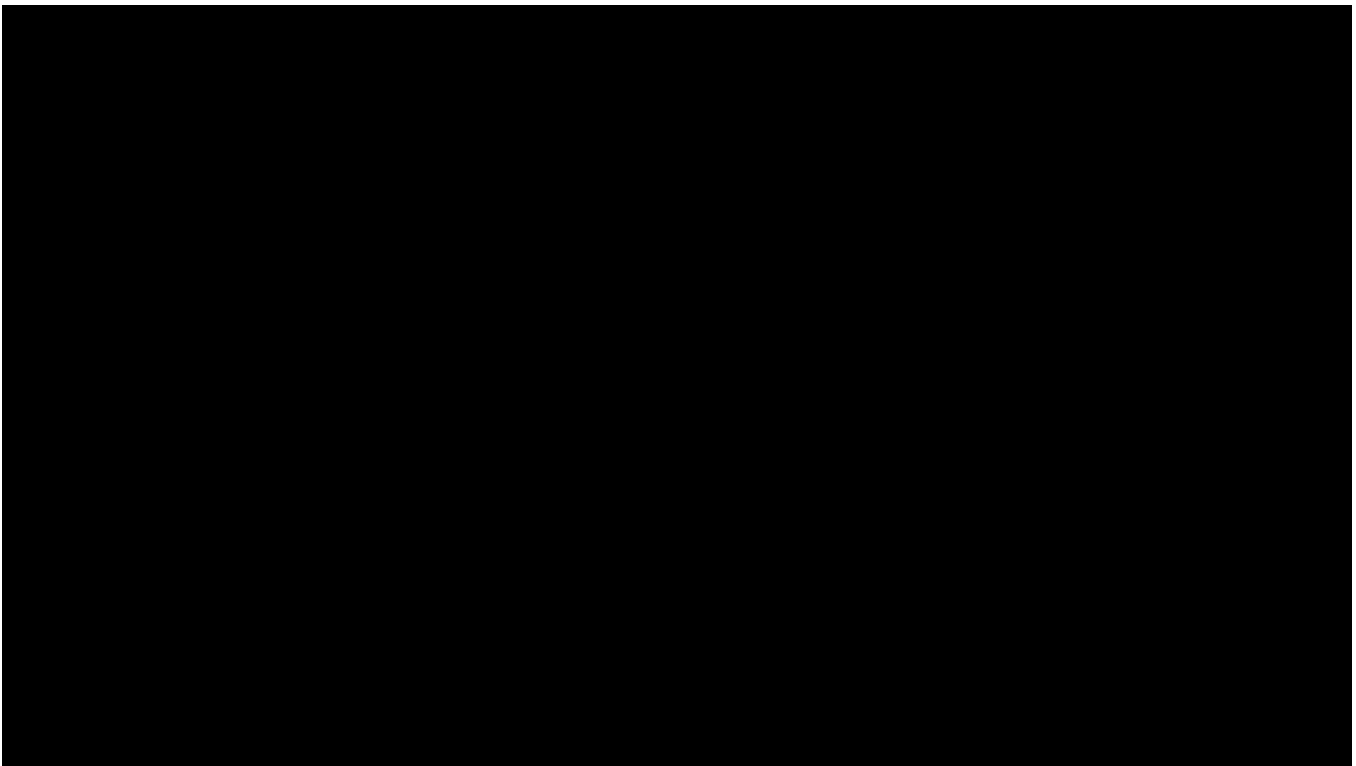
Continue → End of Scenario

As you watch, pay close attention to how verbal communication is used, and notice differences while watching the movie.



Now, let's see the optimal way to manage this case.

Notice how my effective use of empathetic questioning to better understand the patient's symptoms ensures a more informed recommendation.



In this scenario, the pharmacist demonstrates effective communication by employing **active listening, empathy, and open-ended**



By using **reflective and clarifying** responses, the pharmacist ensures the patient feels heard and addresses her specific worries about medication

questions. This approach encourages the patient to share detailed information about her symptoms, pain level, and concerns. interactions with birth control pills.

CONTINUE

Non-verbal Communication



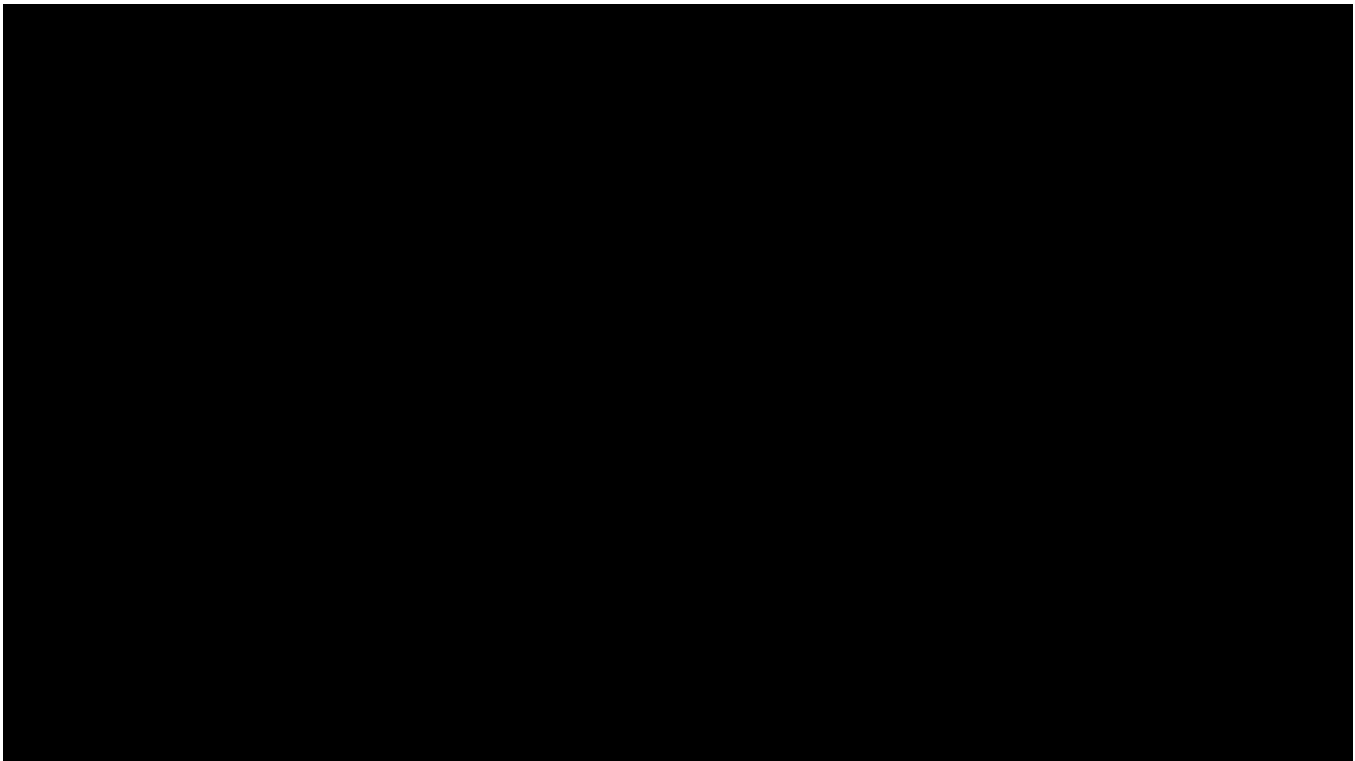
Your **non-verbal communication** with your patient is just as **important** as your verbal communication.¹



What's the impact of incomplete counseling?

In this scene, I *intentionally* fail to acknowledge the patient's discomfort and does not ask enough clarifying questions.

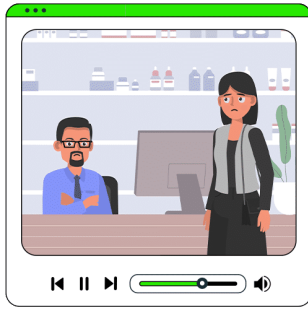
Watch how the lack of non-verbal reassurance affects patient communication and decision-making.



In this scenario, Which body language behavior of the pharmacist most negatively impacts the communication?

- ☐ The pharmacist has a slouched posture, folded arms, and fails to make eye contact with the patient.
- ☐ The pharmacist maintains a relaxed posture and occasionally glances at the patient.

SUBMIT



In this scenario, the pharmacist's **ineffective non-verbal communication** significantly hinders the interaction. The pharmacist's **lack of eye contact, closed posture**, and distraction with paperwork create a disengaged and unwelcoming environment. make his patient feel **uncomfortable, unimportant**, and **embarrassed**.



This makes the patient feel **uncomfortable and hesitant** to share sensitive details about her condition. **The pharmacist's casual attire** further undermines professionalism, potentially reducing the patient's confidence in the advice given.

Now, let's take a closer look at the 2nd aspect of communication, the **non-verbal** one, which includes:

- Ⓐ Paralanguage Ⓑ Body Language

CONTINUE

Ⓐ Paralanguage

TONE

SPEED

VOLUME

Your tone in particular can convey more meaning than your actual words, e.g., changes in the **level** and **range** of your tone convey information about your **feeling** of the person speaking.^{2, 8}

- "Thank you for asking question":^{2, 8}
 - When said in a **harsh voice**, contradicts the words and indicates that **is not meant**.
 - While the same words in a **warm tone** show **sincerity**.



TO NE

SPEED

VOLUME

The speed of your speaking must **enable** your patient to **understand**.^{2, 8}

- For good communication, you should provide a clear message at a speed that gives your patient **time to think** about what is being said.
 - This will help your patient to **understand** and **remember** the message more easily.



tone	speed	volume
<p>Your volume must be adjusted to the circumstance and emphasize key words.^{2, 8}</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. It may be necessary to speak more loudly to patients with hearing problems.2. It may be necessary to speak less loudly to patients when we speak about an embarrassing subject.		



Ⓑ Body Language

The body language in turn includes:⁸

1

Eye Contact

2

Facial Expression

3

Body Posture

4

Appearance

5

Privacy

1. Eye Contact



Cultural Differences in Eye Contact

- The maintenance of eye contact during communication may indicate an **interest** in the subject in **Western** cultures.⁸

- However, in some **Eastern** cultures, people tend to **decrease eye contact** during communication and will often look at the floor when speaking.⁸
-



Importance of Eye Contact in Patient Understanding

- Maintain **eye contact** to pick up nonverbal cues that show if your patient truly understands.
 - Patients **might** say they understand you when they **don't**.
 - Look for **facial expressions**, like a crinkled eyebrow, that reveal confusion or uncertainty.
 - **Don't** miss these important cues by **avoiding** eye contact.⁸
-



Adjusting Eye Contact Based on Patient Response

- The amount of eye contact used should be in response to your patient.
 - If your patient reacts uncomfortably to direct eye contact, looking away occasionally may be a good idea.
 - It is generally true that direct eye contact may have negative consequences when discussing embarrassing subjects.⁸
-

2. Facial Expression



The facial expression of a pharmacist should be **encouraging** and **welcoming**.

You should also be able to read the **meaning** of your patient's facial expression regarding their level of comprehension and receptiveness.⁸



Facial/Verbal Consistency: Facial expressions may **send a message** that you did not intend to transmit.

This is especially damaging when your **facial expressions** are not consistent with your **verbal expressions**.⁸



For example, if you say: “**Go ahead I am listening, tell me about your pain!**” but your eyes are distracted by something else in the pharmacy, you may be communicating mixed messages.

In these situations, people tend to believe your **facial expression** and other **nonverbal messages** more than the verbal aspects of your communication.⁸



The **53 muscles** of the face offer an almost **infinite range** of expression.⁸

3. Body Posture

Most patients will judge your **willingness to talk to them** based on their perception of your body position.⁸

Here are some examples of how body posture can influence communication:⁸

Closed Stance —

Your closed stance with **folded arms** or a body position that is **slouched forward** or tilted to one side may be communicating **reluctance** on your part to talk with them.⁸



Leaning Forward —

Leaning towards your patient who is talking or sitting in a **relaxed fashion**, with a full-frontal appearance to the other person can **encourage good communication**.⁸



Closed Posture —

A closed posture occurs when you have your **arms folded in front of your chest**, legs crossed at the knees, head facing downward, and eyes **looking away** from your patient.

If you hold this posture during an interaction, your patient may respond in a **similar noncommunicative manner** or may break off the interaction altogether.⁸

- Communication from a **closed posture** may shorten or stop further productive interactions.
- Sometimes it is appropriate to use a closed posture, for example, when you want to limit interaction with an overly talkative person.



4. Appearance



Remember, Appearance can play a tremendous



For example, by dressing professionally in the



However, it is important to not judge your patients

role in how a message is received.²

pharmacy, your patients may have more confidence in the information you provide.²

and colleagues based on their appearances.²

5. Privacy



Ensure confidential communication by finding an area where you and your patient cannot be overheard.

This could be a corner in the pharmacy away from the customers' queue.

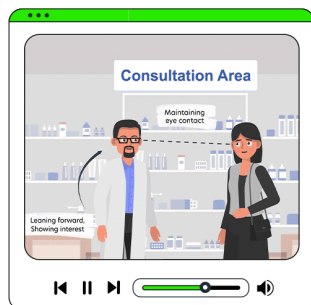
Maintain privacy to provide accurate and complete information, and to allow your patient to ask potentially embarrassing questions.²



The Role of Privacy in Effective Counseling

In this scene, I demonstrate professionalism and empathy by prioritizing the patient's privacy and comfort!

Observe how non-verbal cues and a supportive approach create a more reassuring and effective consultation.



In this scenario, the pharmacist demonstrates effective **non-verbal communication**, creating a comfortable and professional environment for the patient.



By maintaining eye contact, wearing professional attire (a white coat), gesturing to a private consultation area, the pharmacist **shows respect for the patient's privacy.**

CONTINUE

In Summary

- Communication is crucial in pharmacy practice, involving both **verbal** and **non-verbal** interactions to ensure messages are accurately conveyed and understood.
- Effective communication involves speech, body language, voice quality, and listening, with **listening** being **the most significant** component.
- Active listening is essential, requiring full attention and appropriate responses to ensure patients feel heard and understood. Techniques include **restatement**, **reflective**, and **clarifying** responses.
- Using open and closed questions helps gather comprehensive patient information. The **TED** (Tell, Explain, Describe) and **ICE** (Ideas, Concerns, Expectations) principles guide effective questioning.



Non-verbal cues such as eye contact, facial expressions, and body posture play a significant role in communication. Adjusting tone, speed, and volume of speech is also important.

Take-home Message

Effective communication in pharmacy practice involves both verbal and non-verbal skills, including active listening, appropriate tone, body language, and tailored questioning. By mastering these techniques, pharmacists can ensure patient understanding and improve care outcomes.

Congratulations!

You've successfully completed this e-learning module.



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