



Pain consultation guide

A pain consultation is an opportunity to gain useful insights into patients' experience of pain. It's a chance to create a tailored treatment plan to help patients live well with less pain.

Start with the right body language¹

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Facial expression	Smile and appear empathetic.	Avoid frowning as it could indicate disagreement.
Eye contact	Make direct eye contact, keeping eyes wide to show interest.	Avoid looking down or away while your patients are speaking. Avoid raised eyebrows.
Hands and arms	Keep arms uncrossed. Use arm and hand movements, but don't overdo it.	Don't cross your arms - it creates a barrier.
Legs	Maintain a relaxed, open stance.	Don't cross your legs - it can indicate disagreement, uncertainty or disinterest.
Body position	Leaning slightly forward shows interest. A relaxed, upright posture conveys confidence.	Avoid shaking your head as it indicates disagreement. ¹
Head	Occasional nodding shows reassurance. Tilting the head shows interest.	Don't lean in too close. Avoid turning away, but if you have to explain why.

Watch out for red flags

If you spot any warning signs in what the patient is telling you, you should refer to an appropriate specialist.

These could include:³

- Bleeding or recent physical trauma
- Severe unremitting pain
- Difficulty breathing or dizziness
- Severe or persistent headaches
- Loss of physical function, particularly asymmetrical
- Neck pain or stiffness with photophobia (sensitivity to light)
- Unexplained seizure or weight loss
- Visual disturbance



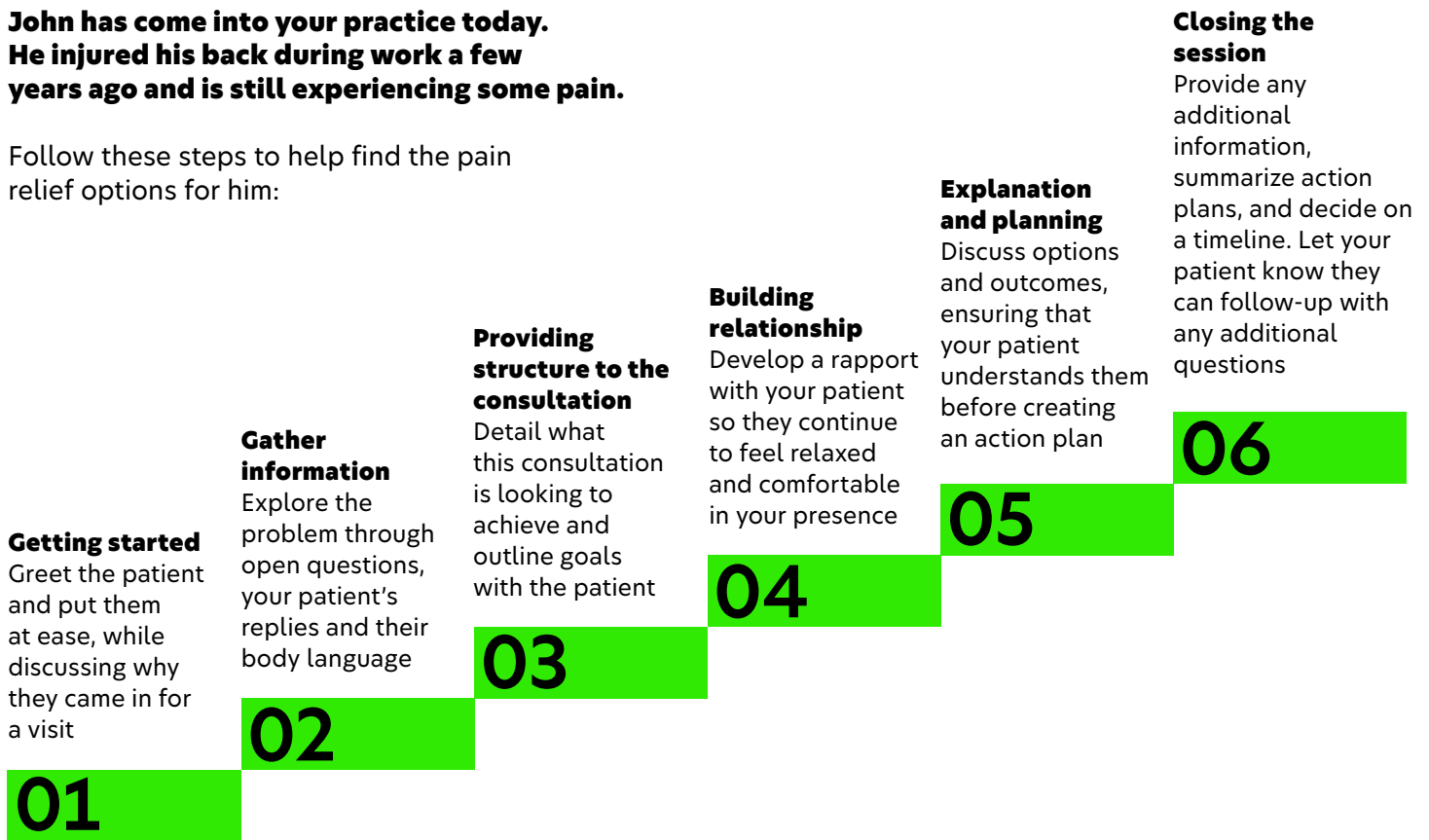
And remember to keep an eye on the patient's body language too. It can indicate if they're feeling uncomfortable or hesitant to share their feelings and thoughts.

6-Step guide to pain consultation

A widely-recognized approach to patient consultation is the six-step Calgary-Cambridge model. It emphasises involving patients in their care, active listening and using open questions.²⁻⁵

John has come into your practice today. He injured his back during work a few years ago and is still experiencing some pain.

Follow these steps to help find the pain relief options for him:



References: 1. Centre for Pharmacy Postgraduate Education. 2016. Consultation Skills for Pharmacy Support Staff. Available at: <http://www.consultationskillsforpharmacy.com/docs/CounterCardsforweb.pdf>. Last accessed November 2022. 2. Naughton CA. Patient-Centered Communication. *Pharmacy*. 2018; 6(1):18. 3. The Pharmaceutical Journal. 2021. How to support patients with acute pain in community pharmacy - The Pharmaceutical Journal. Available at: <https://pharmaceutical-journal.com/article/ld/how-to-support-patients-with-acute-pain-in-community-pharmacy>. Last accessed November 2022. 4. Kurtz S, Silverman J, Benson J et al. Marrying content and process in clinical method teaching: enhancing the Calgary-Cambridge guides. *Acad Med*.2003;78(8):802-9. 5. Main CJ, Buchbinder R, Porcheret M et al. Addressing patient beliefs and expectations in the consultation. *Best Pract Res Clin Rheumatol*. 2010;24(2-2):219-25.

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PM-US-ADV-23-00440

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