



Teach-Back

The Teach-Back Method of communication, often called the Show-Me method, encourages patients to explain concepts in their own words. With Teach-Back, the practitioner provides the information and then asks the patients to recall and restate what has been presented.

When using Teach-Back with patients and families:

- Use plain language
- Slow down
- Break down to short statements
- Focus on the two or three most important concepts
- For more than one concept, teach the main points for the first concept and check for understanding using teach-back, then go to the next concept.

If the patient cannot repeat the information accurately, rephrase the information and start again. If they still do not understand, consider using different wording or other strategies.

Staff Prompts

Ask for Teach-Back in a non-shaming tone. It's not a test of the patient, but a check on how well you explained the ideas, and what the patient heard.

- "I want to be sure I explained everything clearly. Can you please explain it back to me so I can be sure I did?"
- "What will you tell your husband/wife about the changes we made to your blood pressure medicines today?"
- "We've gone over a lot of information, a lot of things you can do to get more exercise in your day. In your own words, tell me what we talked about. How will you make it work at home?"
- Don't ask yes/no questions like: "Do you understand?" or "Do you have any questions?"

Patient Safety

Asking for patients to recall and restate what they have been told is one of 11 top patient safety practices based on the strength of scientific evidence.

Research shows that patients remember and understand less than half of what healthcare providers explain to them. Teach-Back is an effective method to check for understanding.

Teach-Back:

- Creates an opportunity for dialogue in which the provider gives information, then asks the patient to respond and confirm understanding before adding any new information.
- Is asking patients to repeat in their own words what they need to know or do, in a non-shaming way.
- Is NOT a test of the patient, but of how well you explained a concept.
- Is a chance to check for understanding and, if necessary, re-teach the information.