

ACTIVITY 5: Communicating with Health Care Providers

Teacher Instructions

The term **health literacy** is defined as “the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions.” One aspect of health literacy is **communicative literacy**, which includes the ability to communicate successfully with health providers.

For this activity, students will learn about strategies and tips for ensuring they are able to talk with their health providers in an effective way. They will create skits to demonstrate both successful and unsuccessful communication strategies. These skits should focus on the communication by the patient, not the provider. In other words, one skit should show poor communication by a patient, and the other skit should show good communication by the patient. Although the scenarios provided focus on allergy symptoms, topics can be changed to other scenarios, like a general physical visit or getting a flu shot.

Provide students with copies of this handout prior to starting the activity:

- **Ask Me 3** brochure (see pages 3 and 4). The **Ask Me 3** brochure is also available online in several languages at: <http://www.ihl.org/resources/Pages/Tools/Ask-Me-3-Good-Questions-for-Your-Good-Health.aspx>

Also, consider showing this **Ask Me 3** video on effective communication with health providers: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B3EB-icaNKQ>.

Divide the class into teams of 4 students. Assign one of the scenarios to each team (or allow teams to choose). Each team should write two skits: one to illustrate poor communication and another to illustrate good communication. Each skit should be 3-4 minutes in length. The skits will then be acted out in class. You should encourage students to be creative with their skits to make this a fun activity! You can also ask teams to act out the skits created by a different team. You could even create a rubric for students to assess each skit. A sample rubric is provided on the next page.

Patient Communication Skit Rubric

Category	Excellent	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Preparedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are completely prepared and have a strong script written • The role play is between 3-4 minutes. • All students are actively involved in creating and performing skit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are somewhat prepared, and more effort needed to be put into the script. • The role play could have been longer. • Most students are actively involved in creating and performing skit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students were not prepared and their script was absent or unclear. • Role play was too short or too long. • Few students are actively involved in creating and performing skit.
Shows understanding of concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Script is written out • Students used all 3 Ask Me 3 questions. • At least 3 of the tips for communicating with providers were used. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Script is vague. • Students used 1-2 of the tips for communicating with providers. • Students used 2 Ask Me 3 questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Script is not present. • Students used none of the tips for communicating with providers. • Students used 0 or 1 Ask Me 3 question.
Enthusiasm	Facial expressions and body language show enthusiasm for the topic.	Facial expressions and body language are used but enthusiasm is lacking.	Little use of facial expressions and body language.

Every time you talk with a health care provider
ASK THESE 3 QUESTIONS

1

**What is
my main
problem?**

When to ask questions

You can ask questions when:

- You see a doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- You prepare for a medical test or procedure.
- You get your medicine.

2

**What do
I need
to do?**

**What if I ask and still
don't understand?**

- Let your health care provider know if you still don't understand what you need.
- You might say, "This is new to me. Will you please explain that to me one more time?"

3

**Why is it
important
for me to
do this?**

Who needs to ask 3?

Everyone wants help with health information. You are not alone if you find things confusing at times. Asking questions helps you understand how to stay well or to get better.



TOGETHER FOR SAFER CARE

**Ask
Me³**
Good Questions
for Your Good Health

To learn more, visit ihi.org/AskMe3

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Write your health care provider's answers to the 3 questions here:

1. What is my main problem?

2. What do I need to do?

3. Why is it important for me to do this?

Asking these questions can help me:

- Take care of my health
- Prepare for medical tests
- Take my medicines the right way

I don't need to feel rushed or embarrassed if I don't understand something. I can ask my health care provider again.

When I Ask 3, I am prepared. I know what to do for my health.



Your provider wants to answer 3

Are you nervous to ask your provider questions? Don't be. You may be surprised to learn that your medical team wants you to let them know that you need help.

Like all of us, health care providers have busy schedules. Yet they want you to know:

- All you can about your condition.
- Why this is important for your health.
- Steps to take to keep your condition under control.

Bring your medicines with you the next time you visit a health care provider. Or, write the names of the medicines you take on the lines below.

Like many people, you may see more than one health care provider. It is important that they all know about all of the medicines you are taking so that you can stay healthy.

Ask Me 3[®] is an educational program provided by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement / National Patient Safety Foundation to encourage open communication between patients and health care providers.

Ask
Good Questions **Me3[®]**
for Your Good Health