



National Healthcare
Communication
Programme

Closing the Consultation

A leaflet for healthcare staff



Making conversations easier

Closing the Consultation

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1. Forward planning

2. Ensuring appropriate point of closure



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Closing the Consultation

1. Forward planning

The aim when closing the conversation is to agree the next steps and check the patient's understanding of the plan that you have agreed.

Communication skills

- ☐ Outline next steps
- ☐ Safety netting
- ☐ Summarise the conversation (briefly)
- ☐ Check with the patient
- ☐ Ask for any additional questions



Closing the Consultation

1. Forward planning

Outline next steps

Explain what will happen next and agree next steps for you and for the patient.

*I will make arrangements for your treatment...
We will be in touch with your GP.*



Arrange follow-up with patient and consultation with other team members/healthcare professionals as required.



Closing the Consultation

1. Forward planning

Safety netting

Discuss a safety net, be specific. Tell them what you expect to happen if all goes well and also when the patient needs to be urgently reviewed and what to do in that situation.

If you are worried about anything in the meantime you can contact your GP or one of the breast care nurses.



Closing the Consultation

2. Ensuring appropriate point of closure

Summarise the conversation

Alert the patient that the conversation is ending. Affirm the patient's contributions and collaboration.

So just to recap, we talked about how we will continue the medications that Mary is on for now, and we will see if there are any changes in the next day or two.



Closing the Consultation

2. Ensuring appropriate point of closure

Check with the patient

Final check that the patient agrees with and is comfortable with the plan.

Before you go, can I check that you are happy with the plan?

Ask for any additional questions

Move towards the end of the conversation with screening for any additional questions. End the consultation with a handshake and a warm goodbye.

Is there anything that you would like to ask me, that I have not said or explained enough?



Closing the Consultation

2. Ensuring appropriate point of closure

TIP

Encourage the patient/family to use healthcare resources and their own resource networks to find support and attend to their own well-being. Be very clear on where the patient can find information and offer written back up if appropriate. Highlight ongoing support and emphasise that they are not alone. *I am here all night, and you can always reach me if you want to talk. Just ask the nurse to page me.*

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This Skills Card is the work of the National Healthcare Communication Programme.

