



National Healthcare
Communication
Programme

CLOSING THE SESSION

CALGARY-CAMBRIDGE GUIDE



Making conversations easier

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Closing the session

Forward planning

Next steps

- Explain what will happen next. **Agree next steps** for you and for the patient.
- Agree on a time for a **follow-up consultation**, if appropriate.
- Consider whether **referral** to another healthcare professional or other support is required.
- Encourage patient/family to **use healthcare resources** and their own resource networks to find support and attend to their own well-being.
- **Emphasise support** – 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.”*

Safety-netting

- Try to take some burden off the person with whom you are talking – don't leave them wondering what happens next. Explain possible **outcomes**.
- **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 (e.g. too breathless to talk, unable to keep down fluids) and what to do in that situation.



Closing the session

- **Highlight** ongoing and continued care, and that the patient is not being abandoned.
- **Be very clear** on where they can find information.
- **Explain** how pain or other symptoms will be controlled.
- Offer **written back up** if possible.

Ensuring appropriate point of closure

Final check

- **Briefly summarise** what was discussed.
“So, just to review, we talked about how we will continue the medications Mary is on for now, and we will see whether there are any changes in the next day or two. If we see that things are getting worse before then, we will contact you right away”.
- **Check** that the patient is comfortable with the plan
- Ask for any **additional questions**. Move towards the end of the conversation with ‘Screening’...*“are there things you would like to ask, that I have not said, or explained enough?”*
- Allow patient/family to correct or **add** information.



Closing the session

- Ask the patient to tell you **the most important things** they will take from the consultation, for example... *“before you leave, lets recap. What are the main things you are going to do to manage your asthma at home?”*
- Effective closure should also include **subtle visual clues**, such as changing your position, leaning back or putting your notes together.

DOCUMENTATION

- All consultations, including face-to-face, phone discussions, texts, emails and video consulting should be clearly documented and documents included/retained for placement in the patients' healthcare record. Record the details of the consultation and any extra advice or information you have given to the patient.

This Guide is the work of Paul Kinnersley of EACH (the International Association for Communication in Healthcare) and Cardiff University & Winifred Ryan of HSE (Health Service Executive) with the help and support of Peter Gillen, Eva Doherty, Jonathan Silverman and many others in EACH.

