

# Communication skills

## for **Gathering Information**

### #1. EXPLORE THE PATIENT'S PROBLEM

Encourage the patient to tell their story

*Tell me about the problem*

Screen for other problems and symptoms

*What else?*

Use summaries

*Can I just check I've got it right - the problem started two weeks ago...*

Use a mixture of open and closed questions

*Have you noticed any changes in your sleeping?*

Listen attentively without interrupting

Respond to non-verbal cues

*You look sad when you talk about your mother*

Use easy to understand language

### #2. UNDERSTAND THE PATIENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Use **I.C.E.** to establish what the patient is thinking

**I IDEAS**  
What has the patient been thinking about their problem?  
*"Why do you think this has happened?"*

**C CONCERNS**  
Sometimes a patient may have concerns that you have not considered  
*"What has been the main worry for you?"*

**E EXPECTATIONS**  
What does the patient think might be the appropriate action?  
*"What do you think might be the best way forward?"*

**Feelings**  
Respond to verbal or non-verbal cues

*I can see that this has been frustrating for you*

**Effects of illness**  
Use open questions to explore this

*How is this affecting you?*

Find out more: [www.hse.ie/nhcprogramme](http://www.hse.ie/nhcprogramme)

