

Consultation skills for pharmacy support staff

A user's guide



Introduction

The *Consultation skills for pharmacy support staff* cards are a fun, flexible learning resource. Whether you are a dispensing assistant, a medicines counter assistant, or the driver delivering medicines to patients' homes, this learning resource is for you. Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians will also find them useful as a quick reminder of the importance of effective consultation and communication skills and they can use them as a tool to train other team members. The cards are supported by other learning, available via a new *Consultation skills* learning topic at: www.thelearningpharmacy.com

Working through these cards as a team, or on your own, using the other learning resources they point you to, will give everyone in the pharmacy team a chance to develop their communication and consultation skills and help them become the best they can be when speaking with the people who come into the pharmacy.

What does the learning look like?

The cards - These have been designed to be used by individual team members, or used as a training tool in the pharmacy. The cards are held together with a binding ring, making it easy to hang them up in the pharmacy in an easily accessible place, so that everyone can refer to them. The ring can also be easily opened so that single cards can be removed and shared among staff.

There is an introductory card which encourages you to reflect on your existing communication and consultation skills. Then there are nine topic cards, each providing key learning points and top tips, supported by activities that encourage reflection on practice. Card 11 suggests a role play activity, where team members have the chance to put their learning into practice, and the final card offers each person another opportunity to reflect on their skills to see how their learning has helped them to develop.



The topics covered are:

First impressions

Patient-centred care

Speaking and listening

Questioning and gathering information

Body language

Building relationships

Explanation and planning

Closing and follow-up

Overcoming barriers

You can also download the cards from the CPPE website at: www.cppe.ac.uk and from the *Consultation skills for pharmacy practice* pathway - Step 4 on the website: www.consultationskillsforpharmacy.com/pathways6.asp?P=4 which will make accessing the website links much easier.

You will need access to a computer with speakers, or a mobile device connected to the internet, to be able to get the best from these learning cards. Please remember that you should only use these cards in a training session, or in your own time when you are away from the dispensary or shop floor.

The videos - Some of the activities on the cards point to short video clips, which provide an opportunity to observe and critique the skills and behaviours of the pharmacy assistants in the videos. Web links are provided for the videos, as well as QR codes for speedy access. To use the QR code you will need a QR reader on a mobile device (you can download a QR reader app for free on most mobile devices).

theLearningpharmacy.com - The *Consultation skills* learning topic provides short interactive challenges, which support the other learning activities on the cards. Find out more at: www.thelearningpharmacy.com

How to use the cards to learn on your own or to run a training session

1. Learn on your own

Read the introductory card first, then work through each card. We suggest that you work through the cards in order, as the learning builds from one card to the next, but your individual approach to learning will depend on your existing knowledge and skills. We think it will take about 15-20 minutes to work through each card.

Read the information on the front of the card and then put the learning into practice by working through the activities on the back of the card. Web links are provided for the videos, as well as QR codes for speedy access. To use the QR code you will need a QR reader on a mobile device (you can download a QR reader app for free on most mobile devices). We would encourage you only to access the videos in your own time, or as part of a training session away from the dispensary or shop floor.

Discuss what you have learned with other members of your pharmacy team and make sure you use what you have learned next time you are talking with a customer. You could ask your manager to observe you and give you feedback after the customer has left, to make sure you have understood the learning and have improved your communication and consultation skills.

You can also access the *Consultation skills* learning topic floor at: www.thelearningpharmacy.com and work through the bite-sized learning hotspots.



Certificate of completion

Once you have worked through all the cards you can download a certificate of completion from this web page:

www.consultationskillsforpharmacy.com/pathways6.asp?P=4
and ask your manager to sign it.

2. Use the cards in a training session

We suggest you work through one card per training session so that team members have an opportunity to put their learning into practice between the sessions. We think each card will take about 15-30 minutes to work through, depending on how much discussion you have. The cards can be removed from the ring, to be distributed among different members of staff.

Go through the introductory card first, which explains why effective communication and consultation skills are important. On the back of the introductory card we ask the learner to rate how confident they feel at the start of this learning process and we also list what the team members will learn when they are working through the cards.

Then work through each card. We suggest that you work through them in order, as the learning builds from one card to the next, but your approach to the training session will depend on the existing knowledge and skills of your team members.

Read through the information on the front of the card, explaining and building on what is written. If you need more information than the card provides, then please visit the learning pathway, Step 4 on the *Consultation skills for pharmacy practice* website for more information and other resources (www.consultationskillsforpharmacy.com/pathways6.asp?P=4). You can also download the cards from this website, or from the CPPE website at: www.cppe.ac.uk which will make accessing the web links much easier. Then put the learning into practice by asking team members to work through the activities on the back of the card. Web links are provided for the videos, as well as QR codes for speedy access. To use the QR code you will need a QR reader on a mobile device (you can download a QR reader app for free on most mobile devices).

Discuss the learning points from the activities and ask team members which skills they think they demonstrate and which they think they could improve. Agree together what they are going to practise before the next learning session. Try to find time to observe your team members putting their new skills into practice and give them feedback on how they have done. We explain this in more detail overleaf (see *Observing your team*).

Examples of discussion points for training sessions

Here are some examples of how you can use the activities to facilitate a learning session. You can adapt these ideas for use with all the activities on the cards.

Card 2: First impressions, Activity 1 - You are asked to watch an interview with Dr Kate Granger about how important it is to introduce yourself. After all the team have watched the video they could discuss how they would feel about introducing themselves to customers. Each team member could practise by saying, for example, 'Hello, my name is Sarah, I'm the counter assistant'.



Card 2: First impressions, Activity 2 - You are asked to watch two videos and compare the skills of the two assistants. After everyone has watched the videos, discuss which assistant communicated better and ask everyone to reflect on their own skills and decide which assistant they were most like and how they could improve.



Card 4: Speaking and listening, Activity 1 - This activity has a list of commonly used pharmacy words that customers and patients may not understand. You are asked to think of simple words and phrases to explain these. Divide the words up between your team members and get them to think of simple ways to describe these words and phrases. Go round the group and ask them for one idea each. If they get stuck ask the other team members if they can help.



Card 11: Putting it into practice - This card is ideal for use in a group training session. You are asked to put all the learning into practice by doing a role play based on one of the videos you have watched. Role play may not be familiar to pharmacy staff so encourage them to take part. Explain that is a great opportunity to practise their skills away from the customers and that they can get constructive feedback to highlight what they did well and what they could have done better. The card explains how to organise the role play; you will need three people, one to play the pharmacy team member, one to be the customer and one to be the observer. Ask for a volunteer to go first and then take it in turns to play each part.



Observing your team

After each learning session try to find time to observe your team members, using the skill that has been discussed in the training session, to make sure they have understood the learning and have improved their communication and consultation skills. After you have observed them, provide some feedback when the customer has left, telling them first what they did well and then what they could have done better.

You can also use the different bite-sized hotspots on the *Consultation skills* learning topic at: www.thelearningpharmacy.com to plan extra sessions to improve your team members' skills. Don't forget to include all the members of your team who communicate with patients, including your delivery drivers!

Certificate of completion

Once your team members have worked through all the cards you can download certificates of completion from this web page:

www.consultationskillsforpharmacy.com/pathways6.asp?P=4

and sign them as a record of completing the learning.

We are always pleased to receive feedback about our learning resources. Perhaps you could share your ideas for using this new resource by emailing us at: feedback@cppe.ac.uk or find us on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/cppeengland or follow us on Twitter at: [@cppeengland](https://twitter.com/cppeengland) and [@CSfPP](https://twitter.com/CSfPP).

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