

Open School

Video Activity: How can providers elicit patient perspectives and respond with empathy?

(<http://www.ihl.org/education/IHIOpenSchool/resources/Pages/Activities/AACHHowCanProvidersElicitPatientPerspectives.aspx>)

Calvin Chou, MD; Professor, UCSF School of Medicine

Facilitator Instructions

- Review the learning objectives and description with your group.
- Watch the [video](#) together (2 min 37 sec).
- As a group, discuss your reactions to the video, using the discussion questions as a guide.

Learning Objectives

At the end of this activity, you will be able to:

- Discuss the importance of empathy and open communication in the patient-provider relationship.
- Demonstrate how to make empathetic statements.
- Explain how providers can elicit patient perspectives during a visit.
- Demonstrate techniques to engage patients in open dialogue.

Description

In the middle of a visit, clinicians are usually deep in thought. But what's going on in the mind of the patient? According to Calvin Chou, MD, exploring the patient's perspective should be a key component of the clinical reasoning process. In this short video from the American Academy on Communication in Healthcare, you'll learn to improve patient encounters by asking questions, displaying empathy, and encouraging open dialogue.

For more information on improving health care communication skills, visit [The American Academy on Communication in Healthcare](#).

Related IHI Open School Online Courses

- [PFC 101: Dignity and Respect](#)
- [PFC 102: A Guide to Shadowing: Seeing Care Through the Eyes of Patients and Families](#)
- [PS 103: Teamwork and Communication](#)
- [TA 102: Improving Health Equity](#)

Key Topics

Person- and family-centered care; Quality improvement: communication; Satisfaction: patient and family; Engage patient and families in care

Facilitator, show [the video on this page](#). For your group's discussion after the video, feel free to adjust these questions and/or add your own.

Discussion Questions¹

1. Why might the middle of an appointment, when the provider is in “thinking cap mode,” be a challenging time to practice patient-centered care?
2. Do you agree that it's important for clinicians to continually probe for and explore patient perspectives throughout a visit? Why or why not?
3. Dr. Chou presented four aspects of the patient perspective of illness that the clinician should explore during the visit. Can you recall his list? What do you think of it?
4. What does Dr. Chou mean by a “statement of empathy”? What does he do in the video to convey that he cares about the patient's feelings?
5. In your experience as a provider and/or as a patient, how important is it for the patient to feel a sense of empathy from the clinician?
6. Have you ever changed a treatment recommendation as the result of an open dialogue with a patient? What happened?

¹ Please keep patient privacy in mind.