

### Lesson 4: Advanced Questioning Skills

The principle: Question your questions.

The communication behavior: Questioning

Why the behaviors matter: Effective questioning uncovers information, engages patients, and facilitates an interpersonal connection. Ineffective questioning stifles information, confuses patients, and impedes patient-provider connections. Unfortunately, we usually don't pay attention to how we ask questions, which results in poor outcomes.

The behaviors: 4Ps for better questions

- **Prep**  
*What's the most important thing I need to ask?*  
 Don't default to closed questions
- **Pause**  
 Don't talk over patient responses; let them answer
- **Probe**  
 Use nudges like *tell me more* and *please go on*  
 Take their hints & follow unexpected, but potentially fruitful, trails
- **Pro**  
 Ask three pro questions:  
Permission/attention question (at start): Can I talk to you for a minute about issue X?  
Mini clearinghouse (at end): What else should we discuss about issue X?  
Master clearinghouse (at end): What else should we discuss?

About your assessment results:

	<b>Low Self-Monitor:</b>	<b>High Self-Monitor:</b>
<b>Low Argue:</b>	Too selective? Too blunt?	Too selective? Withholding?
<b>Normal Argue:</b>	Too blunt?	Withholding?
<b>High Argue:</b>	Too argumentative? Too blunt?	Too argumentative? Withholding?

Implementing the behaviors:

- Use the 4Ps during patient interactions this week. Pay attention to the ways that questions influence your conversations, and record what happens on this week's reflection sheet.
- Stretch goal: Make it a habit to ask *yourself* two questions before querying others:
  1. Why am I asking this?
  2. How's this going to sound to the other person?

For more information:

Read p. 89-92 of *Stop Talking, Start Communicating*.

Review the lesson here: <http://mouthpeaceconsulting.com/rmchcs/> password: RMCH