



APhA-ASP Evaluation Form Criteria Final Round

- 1. Conducts appropriate counseling introduction by identifying self and the patient or patient's agent.**

The health care professional should introduce himself or herself to the patient or patient's agent, and ask if the person is the patient, the caregiver, or someone simply picking up the prescription for the patient.
- 2. Explains the purpose of the counseling session.**

The health care professional should prepare the patient or caregiver for the information to be presented and explain why the information is important to the patient. It is important to tell patients why the counseling session is important from their perspective.
- 3. Makes appropriate use of the patient profile information.**

This involves verifying that the profile information is up-to-date (current medications, etc.) and that the information points to any possible problems (drug-drug, drug-food, or drug-disease interactions; noncompliance).
- 4. Assesses patient's understanding of the reason(s) for therapy.**

It is extremely useful to find out what the patient already knows. Doing this has the potential for saving time in the counseling sessions and reinforces learned information. In addition, any incorrect information could be corrected at this time. It would be important to assess what the patient understands about the seriousness of the illness, the treatment, dietary restrictions, etc.
- 5. Uses open-ended questions.**

The use of open-ended questions (e.g., "What did your health care provider tell you this medication is for?") rather than close-ended questions (e.g., "Did your health care provider tell you what this medication is for?") helps the health care provider determine what information the patient needs. Answers to open-ended questions may help the health care provider determine the patient's level of understanding.
- 6. Conveys complete information to the patient.**

The health care professional should convey information such as the name of the medication, indication, dosage regimen, storage recommendations, potential side effects, precautions, etc.
- 7. Verifies patient's understanding, via feedback.**

The health care provider should verify patient understanding via patient feedback. For example, "Mrs. Jones, just to be sure that I am clear, could you tell me how you are going to take your medication?" The same would be done with side effects, missed doses, storage conditions, etc. A more direct approach would be: "Mrs. Jones, what time will you take your first dose?" Correct answers can be praised and incorrect information can be corrected. Praising has been shown to reinforce adherence.
- 8. Summarizes by emphasizing key points of information.**

The health care provider should summarize key points of the counseling session. This does not mean simply asking the question, "Do you understand?" because patients might be reluctant to say "no." The health care provider, for example, could say to the patient, "To be sure I haven't left anything out, let me summarize."



SAMPLE HANDOUTS FOR LOCAL COMPETITION

9. Presents facts and concepts in a logical order.

It has been shown that people retain information longer when it is presented from simple to complex. In addition, the most important point should be communicated to the patient first, then repeated again at the end of the counseling session.

10. Provides accurate information.

11. Uses language that the patient is likely to understand.

Health care professionals should avoid technical jargon when counseling patients. For example, "high blood pressure" is generally more understandable than "hypertension." Technical language is only appropriate when the health care professional feels that the patient understands it.

12. Displays effective nonverbal behaviors.

Generally speaking, the most effective interviewers are ones who talk less than the patient and spend more time listening. Listeners convey their understanding and concern through nonverbal gestures (facial expressions, eye contact, nodding) and through short verbal prompts ("I see," "Uh huh," "Really?" etc.)

13. Assesses any real and/or anticipated concerns or problems of importance to the patient.

Patients are often reluctant to vocalize concerns unless they are asked. It is important to deal with this issue early in the conversation otherwise patients may not be listening to the information as attentively. The health care professional should make every effort to understand the concerns of the patient and give those concerns the attention they deserve.

14. Respond with understanding/empathic responses.

This skill is absolutely essential to an effective counseling session. If the patient sees the health care professional as competent, trustworthy, and someone who cares about what happens to them, it increases their compliance. Health care professionals need to hear what patients have to say without judgment or attempting to minimize their concerns.

15. Maintains control and direction of the counseling session.

While the emotional needs of the patient relative to drug therapy should be addressed, the counseling session needs to move forward. Patients may dwell on certain areas even after reassurance and explanation. The health care professional needs to assertively address the concern and move on to be sure all important issues are covered.