

Asking about beliefs and concerns

What do you think?

What do you think is causing it?

I was wondering if you had any ideas yourself about what might be causing it.

Is there anything in particular that you were concerned about?

Picking up on the patient's language and body language

*You said earlier that you were **worried** you might be suffering from depression.*

*You mentioned that you **feared** the ache might be really serious*

*You said you had **fears** about going deaf.*

*I may be wrong but you **looked** really upset when you talked about the breathing difficulties.*

*When you said '**worrying**', I wonder what was going through your mind.*

*You've **obviously** given this a lot of thought.*

Softening the question

*Can you **bear** to go on and tell me more?*

*Can you tell me **a bit more** about your concerns?*

***It would help me** to know what you think it might be.*

***I wonder** what was going through your mind.*

You may need to question the patient more closely to find out exactly what their symptoms are.

Patient: I've been nauseous and I've been feeling a little bit light-headed of late.

Doctor: **What do you mean by** light-headed?

P: Well, a bit dizzy.

D: **When you say dizzy, do you mean** the room actually spins around?

P: No, not that bad. But I might feel like I'm going to lose my balance.

D: **Have you ever actually** fallen over?

P: Not right over. I might have staggered a bit, just once or twice, but not actually fallen over.

D: **Has this happened** recently, in the past two weeks, say?

P: Yes, a few times.

D: **Can you say** how many times in the past two weeks?

P: Oh, I think about three times.

D: Right, I see. Now, **could you tell me more about** the nausea.

Module 2, Section 2.1: Exploring the problem from the patient's perspective

Role play instructions for doctors

Use the information below when you take part in the role play. Explore the patient's problems further. Remember to ask the patient about beliefs, concerns and expectations where appropriate.

You do not need to role play the whole consultation, only the part where you explore the patient's perspective on their problem.

Role play 1

The patient has already told you she/he has problems with his/her eyesight. And that she/he is concerned she/he may be going blind. She/He has also told you that she/he suffers from dizziness and headaches.

Role play 2

The patient has told you that she/he's been feeling breathless and that she/he is concerned she/he may have lung cancer.

Role play 3

The patient has told you that she/he has been vomiting and is tired.

Role play 4

The patient has told you that she/he has been feeling irritable and low and that she/he has chest pains.

Checklist

Did you remember to ... ?

1. ... ask an appropriate opening question to explore each symptom in turn.
2. ... ask further questions to clarify symptoms and elicit further information.
3. ... find out how the complaint is affecting the patient's life.
4. ... get the patient to say what they think is the cause.

Role play instructions for 'patients'

Use the information below when you take part in the role play. Make up any other details as necessary.

Role play 1

You have already told the doctor you have problems with your eyesight and that you have some dizziness and headaches, and you are concerned you are going blind. You have collapsed three times in the past month, have sharp pains in the side of your head which last up to half an hour, your vision is blurred all the time, you don't wear glasses. You think it may be caused by spending too much time on the computer. It is making your work impossible, which really worries you as you think you might have to give up your job.

Role play 2

You have already told the doctor that you've been feeling breathless and that you are concerned you may have lung cancer. You smoke about 20 cigarettes a day and have been smoking this much for 15 years. Until recently your health has been fine and this sudden breathlessness has got you very worried. You have a husband/wife and three young children and you fear what will happen to them if you get seriously ill.

You have also been under quite a lot of stress at work, and you have a bad relationship with some of your colleagues.

Role play 3

You have already told the doctor that you have been vomiting and feeling tired recently. In fact, these problems have been going on for about a week and you have been sick every day. You haven't been eating anything unusual and you don't think it's caused by food poisoning. You have two small children and they have been ill recently and you have found it quite difficult to look after them – you have had to take time off work and you are worried that this may affect your chances of promotion.

Role play 4

You have already told the doctor that you have been feeling irritable and low (mildly depressed) and that you have had some chest pains. Your bad moods are affecting your family and friends. The chest pains are worrying you but you haven't told your family or friends about them yet.