

# PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR OBESITY MANAGEMENT IN PRIMARY CARE

## Chapter 6 Effective Communication - Downloadable Resource

Table 2. Ask-Tell-Ask Method

Definition	Guidelines	Example
<p><b>ASK</b></p> <p>Ask the patient to describe his/her understanding of the obesity-related issue*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opens your conversation with the patient</li> <li>• Helps you take into account his/her level of knowledge and emotional state</li> </ul>	<p>Use your patient's current understanding and emotional state to guide your communication</p>	<p>"You told me you are interested in a 'ketogenic diet.' What's your understanding of this type of eating plan?"</p>
<p><b>TELL</b></p> <p>Tell the patient what you need to communicate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gives the patient results, treatment options, or other information</li> <li>• Customizes your message with respect to the patient's specific needs</li> </ul>	<p>Begin with a forewarning to soften unexpected or difficult news</p> <p>Avoid medical jargon—use straightforward language Give information in small chunks</p> <p>Slow down, pause, and check in</p>	<p>"You will need to take two pills every day until the bottle is empty. It's best to take one pill at breakfast and one pill at dinner—both pills with food. How will that schedule work for you?"</p>
<p><b>ASK</b></p> <p>Ask the patient what he/she understood you just said</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opens your conversation with the patient</li> <li>• Offers the patient a chance to ask questions</li> <li>• Suggests where you might go next with your conversation</li> <li>• Provides an opportunity for clarification</li> </ul>	<p>Have your patient restate what you said in his/her own words</p> <p>Use open-ended (not yes/no) questions</p> <p>Listen for clarity and factual accuracy in his/her responses</p> <p>Encourage further questions</p>	<p>"Who are you going to tell about this visit when you get home? To make sure I was clear and did a good job of explaining things to you, can you tell me what you are going to say?"</p>

\*Note: Some typical issues include nutrition and eating plans, physical activity, lifestyle supports and challenges, sleep patterns, medications, surgery, and obesity-related complications.

**Source:** This table was adapted by Integrated Learning Partners for the Practical Strategies for Obesity Management in Primary Care CME/CE activity only.