



Be Pain Smart – My Role

My plan for communicating better

Communicating after a brain injury and with chronic pain can be difficult. If you want to have an important conversation, it can help to think about what exactly you want to say and write down your key points.

Use this worksheet the next time you need to have an important conversation. The example below is about when you are going to see your doctor, but you can use this tool for any conversation you want to have.

Give it a try – imagine your pain has gotten worse and you are going to see your doctor. Think about what you would say to the doctor.

This week my pain has gotten worse.

Now, think about what you would like to hear back from the doctor.

I want the doctor to tell me that my pain is not going to get worse. I want to hear that this is not a new injury. That it is just a flare-up and will get better in a few days.



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Unfortunately, you cannot control how others hear and understand your message, but you can be clear about what you are trying to get out of the conversation. Most of the time you are looking for at least one of these five things.

1. **Understanding** – to feel heard
2. **Reassurance** – to feel comfort
3. **Give information** – to tell others something important or share your experience
4. **Action** – for them to do something
5. **Advice** – to get guidance.

Read over what you wanted to hear from the doctor – was it a clear message? Which of the five points were you looking for? Write it down below.

Reassurance

Now look at what you were originally going to say to the doctor; does it match up? Was it clear what you wanted to hear? Have another try at writing your message to the doctor.

This week my pain has gotten worse. I would like you to check to see if it is new or just a flare-up. I am getting worried about this, so I would like some reassurance that my pain is not getting worse.



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Now it is your chance to have a turn. Imagine your pain has gotten worse and you are going to see your doctor. Think about what you would normally say to the doctor.

Now, think about what you would like to hear back from the doctor.



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Read over what you wanted to hear. Which of these five points were you looking for?

1. **Understanding** – to feel heard
2. **Reassurance** – to feel comfort
3. **Give information** – to tell others something important or share your experience
4. **Action** – for them to do something
5. **Advice** – to get guidance.

Write it down below.

Now look back at what you were originally going to say to the doctor; does it match up? Was it clear what you wanted to hear? Have another try at writing your message to the doctor.

It is easy to see how misunderstandings can happen, so give this tool a go the next time you need to have an important conversation. Be patient with this; it might take a few tries to get the hang of it.



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Here is a blank plan for when you want to have an important conversation.

Think about what you would normally say.

Now, think about what you would like to hear back.



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Read over what you wanted to hear. Which of these five points were you looking for?

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3. **Give information** – to tell others something important or share your experience
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5. **Advice** – to get guidance.

Write it down below.

Now look back at what you were originally going to say; does it match up? Was it clear what you wanted to hear? Have another try at writing your message.