

# YOUR VOICE



## IN A GP APPOINTMENT

Created by the HEIF health  
resource co-production group



# YOU ARE NOT ALONE

This booklet is a companion for your GP appointment to have the conversation you want.

This guide covers

**What happens in a consultation?**

**Ideas to consider before, during and after the appointment**



# YOU ARE NOT ALONE

We would generally like to feel these things when talking to a healthcare professional:

**Trusting and free to talk**

**Grounded and in control**

**Listened to and understood - that they have felt how I feel**



# BEFORE THE APPOINTMENT

Each practice has their own appointment system, often a mixture of online forms or phone calls at a specific time.

**If your condition deteriorates** – ask for an emergency appointment or call 111

**In an emergency** – call 999

You can sometimes ask for a double appointment if you have multiple concerns.

# BEFORE THE APPOINTMENT

Write down your key points



**I**

**Ideas** – I think this is happening to my body..

**C**

**Concerns** – I am worried about this...

**E**

**Expectations** – I would like this to happen... My best case scenario is...

# BEFORE THE APPOINTMENT

Think about what support would help you communicate best. You could:

**Role play** with a friend to practice what you are saying.

**Take a friend** with you who will advocate with you. They could write down what you discuss or join the conversation when you ask.

# WHAT HAPPENS?

One way GPs are trained to hold their appointments is to have three stages:

**1**

## **Opening**

Listening to the patient, establishing what's wrong. This is where you can share your experience and your concerns.



# WHAT HAPPENS?

2

## **Narrowing down**

Exploring warning signs and symptoms. The doctor might ask you some follow up questions and if relevant, ask to do an examination.

3

## **Management**

Discussing what would be helpful and what you both want to do about the concern.



# IN THE APPOINTMENT

A GP appointment can sometimes feel stressful and short as many appointments are 10 minutes long, but you can take the lead.



**Tell the doctor what would work for you to get the most out of the appointment.**

# USEFUL PHRASES

To communicate about what would work for you



**Please call me ....**

**Feel free to interrupt...**

**I just want to let you know about me...**

**I am worried about...**(needles, or another fear that might come up)

**I find it easiest to share my concerns when...**



# EXPLAINING YOUR SITUATION

**Start your explanation of your health concern from the beginning. It doesn't matter what you have told the receptionist. You can use notes if useful.**

If you don't think your health problem is related to your mental health, think ahead about how you can explain this to the GP.

# USEFUL PHRASES

If you have multiple health concerns



**Do you mind if I list all my problems?**

**My top problem is...**

**Can I come back to talking about the others?**



# USEFUL PHRASES

To explain if it feels different to your mental health condition



**It feels worse / different from my usual depression / anxiety.**

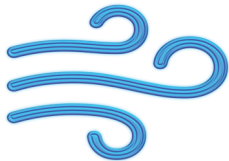
**I don't feel more depressed.**

**This is a bad day / This is a good day / This is an ongoing problem.**



# BEING UNDERSTOOD

If you're not understood straight away, or want to get the consultation back on track



**Take a deep breath**

**Be calm and patient**

**Go back to your key points**

# THE NEXT STEP

It is useful to go away knowing the next step, what you should do if things don't improve and what the possibilities for treatment are.

You or the GP could **write down the next steps.**



# USEFUL PHRASES

To understand what's happening next



**How long will it take to get better or see change?**

**When should I expect to come back?**

**What do I need to do?**

**What is the next step?**





# MANAGING YOUR HEALTH

**The next step might not always be medication. There are multiple ways to improve physical health.**

We have created another resource with top tips for managing physical health and there are lots more out there too:

**[www.bbbc.org.uk/health-resources](http://www.bbbc.org.uk/health-resources)**

# AFTER THE APPOINTMENT

If your concern isn't improving or has got worse after you have followed the advice from the doctor, you may need to book a follow-up appointment.

**GPs build their understanding about your condition over time, so it is important to return to the GP if things haven't changed.**

# FURTHER SUPPORT

If you want more support to make your voice heard, there are organisations who offer advocacy support.

**Pohwer - <https://www.pohwer.net>**

Your GP surgery may have a care coordinator or other professionals that can support you too. Ask the receptionist.

# GOOD LUCK!

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