

10 Elements for Using Teach-back Effectively



Set-up

- Identify key “need-to-know” concepts and “need-to-do” tasks for teach-back.
- Include family members/caregivers or other support persons when present and appropriate.

Teach-back

- Be respectful and address cultural and communication needs.
- Use plain language.
- Use words that show you are taking responsibility for being clear.
- Ask the person, in a caring way, to explain back (or show back), using their own words. Do this after each “need-to-know” concept or “need-to-do” task (Chunk and Check).
- If the person is not able to teach back accurately, explain in a different way and re-check.
- Use non-shaming open-ended questions.

Support

- Use reader-friendly plain language materials to support learning, sharing, and finding information.
- Document use of and the person’s response to teach-back.

For more about each of the 10 Elements, see [10 Elements for Using Teach-back Effectively – Detail.](#)

What is Teach-back?

- Asking a person, in a caring way, to explain **in their own words** what they need to know or do.
- An evidence-based health literacy intervention to improve patient-provider communication and health outcomes¹ by:
 - Making sure you explain information clearly. It is not a test or quiz of people.
 - Checking for understanding and, if needed, explaining in a different way, and checking again.
 - Identifying those who may need more help with understanding and remembering.
- A way to promote health equity through health literacy.

Teach-back can be used by anyone sharing important information in clinical and non-clinical settings. “Person” refers to the one being asked to teach back (patient, client, family member, caregiver, other supporting individual).

¹Schillinger, 2003