

# Improving the Patient Visit



## The ACT PRIME Study

Infectious Disease Research Collaboration, Uganda.  
ACT Consortium, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, UK.



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# INTRODUCTION TO THE MANUAL

## Before we start...

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Welcome to the Learners Manual for the module entitled – Patient Centred Services: Improving the patient visit.

We are very glad to have you as one of the first set of health workers to participate in this important training.

Everything you will need during the course and as a reference is included in this manual. In addition, there are notes and explanations included in the manual for you to refer back to at a later point.

The trainer will guide you on when to use the manual. Please focus on the trainer when she is talking and focus on the manual exercises when the trainer has guided you to a specific page, which needs your attention. The additional resources in the manuals are for your future reference.

Thank you for participating fully in this training and for respecting your fellow colleagues. Each one of you is unique and each one of you learns at a different pace. The trainer will take great care to cater to all your needs in order to make the training a success. Thank you in advance for doing your part to make it a valuable learning experience.

## How to use this manual...

Throughout this manual, you will come across certain re-occurring symbols and boxes. These highlight certain key aspects for learning or contain information, which will help you during or after the training. The following is an explanation of these symbols.

### Icons & symbols

**Purpose:**

**Learning Outcomes:**

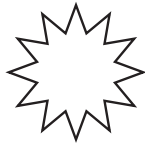
#### PURPOSE & LEARNING OUTCOMES

This coloured box can be found at the start of each main topic section. In this box you will find the PURPOSE of the Topic and the key LEARNING OUTCOMES for that Topic.



#### KEY QUESTION

This symbol can be found when a KEY QUESTION is being asked.



#### DEFINITION or KEY LEARNING POINT

This symbol represents a DEFINITION or a KEY LEARNING POINT to be remembered.



#### GROUP WORK

This symbol represents GROUP WORK. The training is interactive and a significant amount of your time will be spent in GROUP WORK. This symbol indicates that the activity will be done in a group. This means that you need to be a team player and allow all members of your group to participate equally.



#### WORK IN PAIRS

This symbol represents WORK IN PAIRS. This will be an opportunity for you to work one to one with a colleague. Pair work could mean buzzing or role playing, interviewing or problem solving. Be sure that each person in the pair gets a chance.



#### SUMMARY

This symbol will be shown where you can find a SUMMARY box – you can review these summary points at home or before the next training and in the future.



#### SELF-OBSERVATION ACTIVITY

This mascot symbol will be shown where there is a SELF-OBSERVATION ACTIVITY and some guidelines for you to follow.

*Your Notes:*

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#### NOTES

This represents a space for your NOTES. Feel free to write your comments and questions and anything that you do not understand in these spaces and discuss it with your trainer before, during or after a training.

## What are you going to learn...

From October 2009 until February 2010, the Infectious Disease Research Collaboration conducted research activities in Tororo District. We surveyed households, health workers and community medicine distributors, and talked to groups of community members and health workers to learn more about how health care is provided to sick children in this area, especially at health centres.

During this research, community members told us about having to wait for long hours for treatment at the health centre, and said that lateness of the health worker or lack of prioritisation of the health worker to attend to patients were reasons for long waiting times.

Community members were frustrated by this delay, and it discouraged them from attending health centres. In addition, health care workers themselves told us that, to them, good quality care means to show courtesy to patients on arrival at the health centre. Receiving the patients, greeting them, providing them with a seat and offering guidance to the different departments were felt to be important. Good welcome and orientation were felt to be essential to ensure that patients felt well cared for, and willing to return to the health centre on subsequent illness episodes.

The **key learning outcomes** for PCS 04 are as follows:

Topic	Learning Outcomes By the end of this module, you will be able to...
<b>Self-Observation Activity reflection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Become aware of ways to invite your patients and colleagues to co-operate and the impact of doing this.</li> </ul>
<b>The patient visit: becoming aware of and developing ways to improve the patient experience at the health centre</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognise that we all have different perspectives, including as health workers and patients.</li> <li>• Put yourself into the shoes of a patient approaching a health centre as an organisation with unspoken 'rules'.</li> <li>• Explore reasons why patients have to wait a long time, and develop strategies that meet health workers' as well as patients' needs better.</li> <li>• Implement strategies to improve the welcome of patients at health centres.</li> <li>• Implement strategies to improve the orientation of patients at health centres.</li> <li>• Implement strategies to ensure patients are seen fairly.</li> </ul>

# TRAINING AGENDA

This module will last 3 hours from start to finish.

Today's training will start at \_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_ Today's training will end by \_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_

Topics	Total time
<b>Introduction to the module</b> - Greetings & Review - Training rationale and Learning outcomes	<b>15 minutes</b>
<b>TOPIC 1: Self-Observation Activity Reflection</b> - Introduction to the topic - Rationale	<b>20 minutes</b>
<b>Break</b>	<b>30 minutes</b>
<b>Topic 2: The Patient Visit</b> - Introduction to the topic - Thinking about the topic - Principles - Practice - Discussion - Planning	<b>85 minutes</b>
<b>Future Self-Observation Activity</b> - Introduction - Instructions - Future Self-Observation Activity	<b>15 minutes</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>5 minutes</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>170 minutes = 2 hours 50 minutes</b>





# INTRODUCTION TO THE MODULE

**Purpose:** To welcome and orient you to the training and help you to understand what you can expect of the training and what will be expected of you as participants.

**Learning Outcomes:** By the end of this session, you will:

- 1) Know the names of co-participants.
- 2) Know the name of the training leader.
- 3) Review and accept a set of ground rules for the training.
- 4) Review the previous module's key learning points.
- 5) Know the learning outcomes and purpose of the module.

## 1. Greetings & Review

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**Name of Trainer:**

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**Names of co-participants:** *complete if you wish*

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**Ground Rules:** *that will support the learning of all participants*

*Please write the ground rules agreed on by the group below:*

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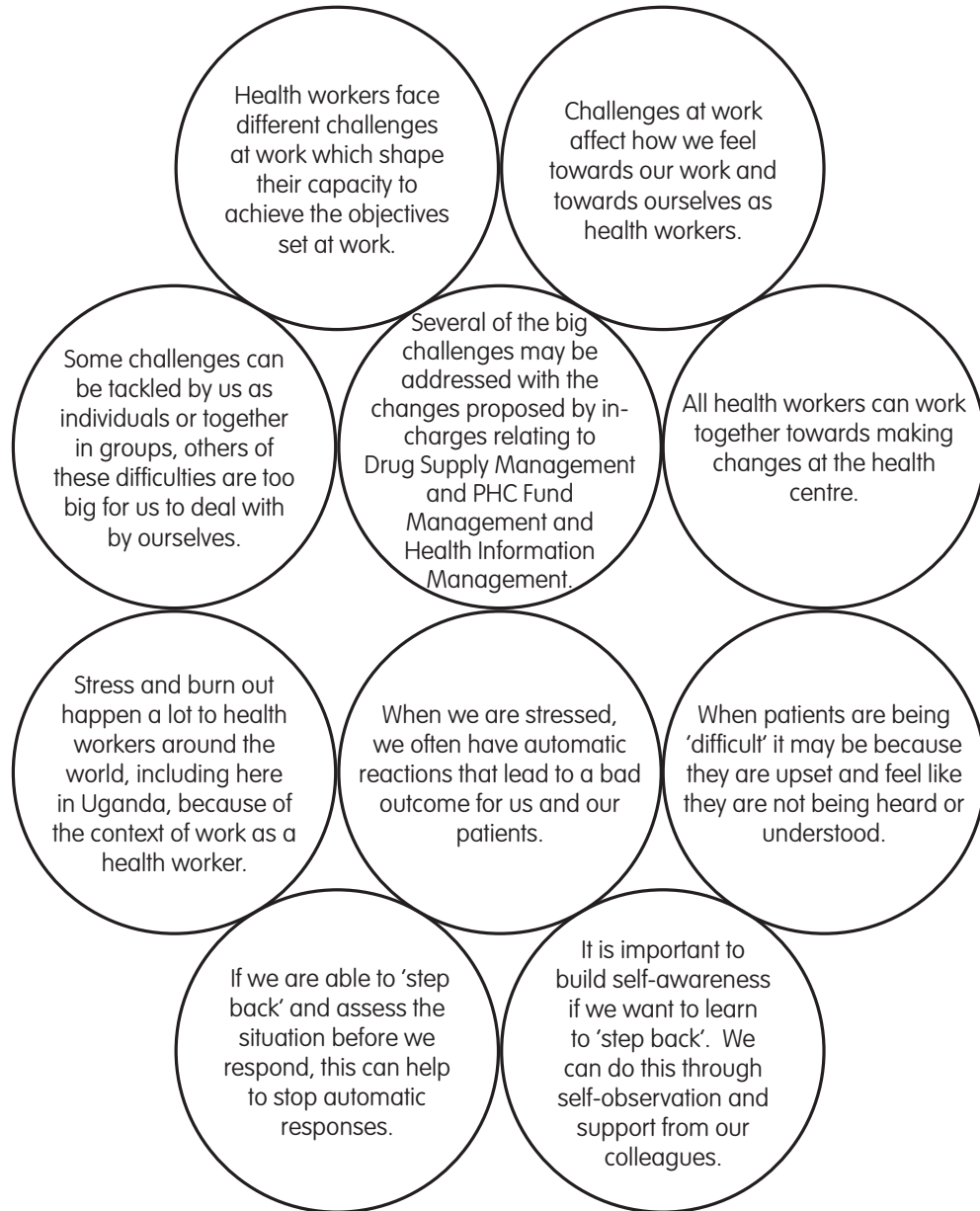
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## Review Circles

**Guide:** This is an opportunity to review the learning outcomes from the previous module. Some or all participant can read out a summary point in one of the circles. You can use whatever kind of voice you wish – for example a loud voice, a singing voice. Be sure to speak clearly. Introduce the person sitting next to you before reading out a summary circle.



## 2. Training rationale and learning outcomes

For this module you will be concentrating on ways to improve the patient visit, particularly on a good welcome and orientation, both essential to ensure that patients feel well cared for, and willing to return to the health centre in the future.

The **key learning outcomes** for PCS 04 are as follows:

### Box 1: Learning Outcomes.

Topic	Learning Outcomes By the end of this module, you will be able to...
<b>Self-Observation Activity reflection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Become aware of ways to invite your patients and colleagues to co-operate and the impact of doing this.</li> </ul>
<b>The Patient Visit: Becoming aware of and developing ways to improve the patient experience at the health centre</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognise that we all have different perspectives, including as health workers and patients.</li> <li>• Put yourself into the shoes of a patient approaching a health centre as an organisation with unspoken 'rules'.</li> <li>• Explore reasons why patients have to wait a long time, and develop strategies that meet health workers' as well as patients' needs better.</li> <li>• Implement strategies to improve the welcome of patients at health centres.</li> <li>• Implement strategies to improve the orientation of patients at health centres.</li> <li>• Implement strategies to ensure patients are seen fairly.</li> </ul>

*Your Notes*

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# TOPIC 1: SELF-OBSERVATION ACTIVITY REFLECTION

**Purpose:** To discuss the observations and results of Self-Observation Activity 4: Inviting the patient to cooperate.

**Learning Outcomes:** By the end of this session, you will:

- 1) Become aware of ways to invite your patients and colleagues to co-operate and the impact of doing this.

## 1. Discussion

At the last workshop you were asked to carry out Self-Observation Activity 4: Inviting the Patient to Co-operate.



### ACTIVITY A – Self-Observation Activity Discussion

**Guide:** In small groups discuss what you observed this past week while doing your self-observation activity. Listen, appreciate, probe, and don't judge. Choose someone in your group to be a note taker who will write down the main points ready to feedback to the wider group if there is time. Also feel free to write your own ideas now or later, in the space provided below.



#### Question 1

**What did you do this past week that seemed to have a positive outcome on the other person - a patient or colleague?**

**Guide:** Share with the group any good times this week when you were able to put your good communication skills into practice. Tell the group about your experience.

Your Notes

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#### Question 2

**Did you have a 'difficult' patient this week?**

**How did you handle this, and not show them how annoyed/sad/tired you were?  
What was the impact of doing this on the rest of the consultation?**

Your Notes

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Topic 1: Self-Observation Activity Reflection



**Question 3**

***How did you achieve good results this week?***

Your Notes

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**Question 4**

***How have these new skills changed your work as a health worker?***

Your Notes

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**Question 5**

***What have you learned about your own behaviour by doing this exercise of self-observation?***

Your Notes

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**Guide:** Feel free to write down any feed back from the larger group about the specific communication skills that individuals in the group used in practice and the results they observed.

COMMUNICATION SKILL USED	RESULT



### Summary Box – Self-Observation Activity Reflection

For reference for learners

- You will have reflected on your self-observation experience.
- You will have shared the difficulties, impact on work, and the communication skills you managed to use and what you have learned about your own behaviour as a health worker striving to provide patient centred services.
- You will be ready to use these self-observation skills independently and with the support of your colleagues.

Topic 1: Self-Observation Activity Reflection



## TOPIC 2: THE PATIENT VISIT

**Purpose:** To build your capacity to improve the welcome, orientation and equal treatment of patients at your health centre.

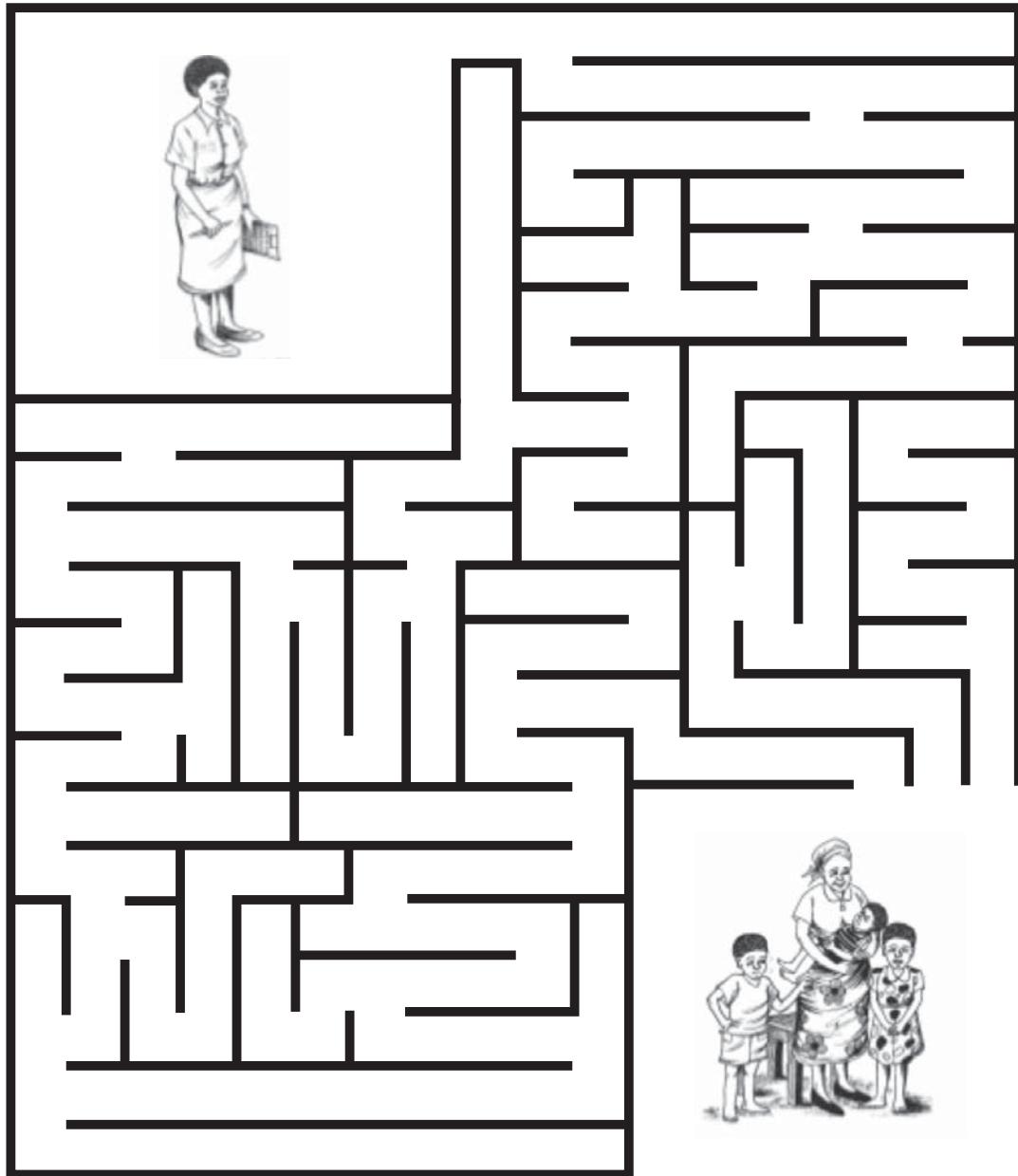
**Learning Outcomes:** By the end of this session, you will:

- 1) Recognise that we all have different perspectives, including as health workers and patients.
- 2) Put yourself into the shoes of a patient approaching a health centre as an organisation with unspoken 'rules'.
- 3) Explore reasons why patients have to wait long, and develop strategies that meet health workers' as well as patients' needs better.
- 4) Implement strategies to improve the welcome of patients at health centres.
- 5) Implement strategies to improve the orientation of patients at health centres.
- 6) Implement strategies to ensure patients are seen fairly.

## 1. Introduction to the topic

### ACTIVITY B – Maze

**Guide:** Complete the puzzle below as quickly and as quietly as you can. The first participant among you to connect the patients to the health worker with a direct line, should shout: 'I FOUND THE HEALTH WORKER'.



#### Learning Point

The WINNERS are the lucky patients who managed to find the health worker through the many passages of a health centre. The other patients, who did not find their way or took a long time to find their way, have to go somewhere else for care.

Topic 2: The Patient Visit



**How did those of you who did not find your way feel when you couldn't complete the maze?**

Your Notes

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**Learning Point**

There are blocks in this maze that prevent the mother, who does not know her way around, from getting to the health worker.



**What are the reasons why patients, like this mother, fail to get to the health worker in your health centres?**

Your Notes

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**2. Thinking about the topic**

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**Think of a time when you went to a bank for the first time, did you know what to do?**

Yes

No



**What did you see when you went to the bank?**

**WHAT I SAW THE FIRST TIME I WENT TO A BANK**



**How did you feel?**

#### HOW I FELT AT THE BANK



**How did being unfamiliar and uncomfortable with the bank affect your ability to get everything done that you wanted?**

#### RESULT OF FEELING UNFAMILIAR AT THE BANK

### 3. Principles

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#### Learning Point

Patients at the health centre are scared too.

Patients who are unfamiliar with coming to health centres also experience these same feelings and fears that you did the first time you went to the bank.

Organisations have unspoken rules.

- A bank and a health facility are both organisations that have their own 'rules'/'systems'. Some are spoken, others we learn even though they are not said out loud.
- Is it acceptable to dance in a bank?
- No! There is an unspoken rule that says dancing in a bank is not acceptable behaviour!



**What are some of the things that patients that that health workers expect from them at health centres?**

*For example, the way the patient should behave, the things the patient needs to know or the things the patient needs to do...*

<b>HELPFUL RULES:</b> A patient needs to know to -	<b>UNHELPFUL RULES:</b> A patient believes she/he needs to know -



**ACTIVITY C – Discussion about rules**

**Guide:** In small groups of 4 -6 please discuss the questions below. Remember to listen, appreciate, probe your colleagues but don't judge them. Write your ideas below.



**Question 1**

**What is the result of these 'unhelpful (and unspoken) rules' on patients while they are at the health centre?**

Your Notes

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**Question 2**

**What is the result of these 'unhelpful rules' on community members when they are sick and considering coming to the health centre?**

Your Notes

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**Question 3**

**What is it that health workers, are doing that is creating the 'unhelpful rules'?**

Your Notes

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**How can we improve the situation?**

**Health workers need to see the unspoken rules, and challenge them by changing.**

- You can be more helpful to patients if you can see these rules, and do what you can on your side to change the way you treat the patients. Then, you can encourage them to not believe in the unhelpful rules, because this is not how you want them to be treated in your clinic. You can then make your real expectations of them clear.

**Health workers need to understand how patients come to learn these unspoken rules.**

**Trial and error:**

- In the consultation, if you show that you disapprove, for example about drinking local beer, the patient will be unlikely to tell you about it, which means you can't get a full picture, and will not be able to help the patient to recover fully.

**Patients also learn by watching other patients or health workers:**

- At the health centre, patients will try to see what they should do by watching others. They may be waiting in a long line for a long time, but then they see someone wearing smart clothes arrive and they are given special treatment - they are seen straight away. Then, all of the patients in the line will learn that if they dress smartly then maybe they have a better chance of seeing the health worker quickly.



**What can Health workers do to make sure that the patient in the consultation knows the helpful/right rules?**

- If the health worker builds rapport, listens carefully and tells the patient, 'you should feel free to tell me anything about your concerns and situation. This is a confidential space and I want to help you to recover if I can,' then the patient will know that the expectation is that they can say anything and that the health worker will keep their responses confidential.
- In this case, the expectations are stated out loud and explained.



**What can Health workers do to make sure the patients in the queue know the helpful/right rules?**

- If the health worker comes out to the queue and assesses who is most sick, and explains to the others that they will be seen after these sickest patients, those who are waiting will see that the health worker knows she is there and also that the health worker understands that she is waiting.
- This helps the patient to know that she should wait but to feel better about it. The expectation is not hidden - it is said out loud and it is explained.

## Topic 2: The Patient Visit

**What is the main point?****To see things from the patients' perspective**

- Health workers need to see the patient's perspective. They do not know the way you want them to behave. You can give them some help. You can tell them what health workers expect them to do, and what they can expect from you. By doing this in a friendly way, health workers will have positive impact on the way patients flow, how satisfied they are, and how well consultations go. It may even save you time!

#### 4. Practice

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**Techniques health workers can use to make patients feel more comfortable**

- Welcome
- Orientation

**ACTIVITY D – Discussion about techniques to make patients feel more comfortable**

**Guide:** In groups of 4 – 6 discuss the question that follows. Write your ideas in the spaces below each question. You will have a chance to feedback as a group.

**What can you do to make your patients feel more welcome when they arrive at your health centre?**

#### Ideas to improve the welcome of patients to your health centres





## ACTIVITY E – Welcome Role Play

**Guide:** Each of you will have a role to play, to be picked from a box.

The role play will take place in the waiting area of a health centre.

If you are playing the role of a patient, please get yourself into the role of a patient, and if you are acting as a health worker, do your best to put into practice the skills learnt about welcoming and guiding patients.

The role play will take place in several parts, starting when the trainer says 'ACTION!', and stopping when the trainer says 'CUT!'

You will receive a slip of paper to show the role you will play. Below is a description of the scenario relevant to your role, read it through now.



### ROLE PLAY SCENARIOS

#### Role 1: Health worker role

- The health worker should move down the line looking for the most serious patients.
- The health worker should then move these patients to the front and explain to the other patients about why they are queuing and why these patients are at the front.
- The health worker should explain that 'we have a commitment that we will not allow any person to come to the front of the queue unless they are the most sick person.'

#### Role 2: Volunteer role

- Come out to the waiting area and greet the new patient as they arrive.
- Show a good welcome and ask them to take a seat at the end of the line.
- Explain how long they will have to wait.

#### Role 3: Arriving patient role

- As you arrive, you are shy and afraid.
- If the volunteer is friendly, you can ask some questions about what to expect in terms of the waiting time and whether drugs are there.

#### Roles 4-7: Patients (in queue) role

- Think about the symptom you have, and how you are feeling.
- When the health worker comes down the line, you can tell them this as your main complaint.
- Think about how you feel about where you are sitting in the queue and how long you have been waiting.

## 5. Discussion

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### **Reviewing the welcome role-play go**

#### **Were you the arriving patient?**

- How did you feel about being the arriving patient? What did the volunteer do well to make you feel welcome? What could be improved?

Your Notes

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#### **Were you the arriving patient?**

- How did you feel as the volunteer? Is what you did possible in your workplace?

Your Notes

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#### **Were you a patient in the queue?**

- How did you all feel as the patients in the queue? What made you feel good, and what made you feel uncertain?

Your Notes

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#### **Were you a health worker?**

- How did you feel about being the health worker? Why?

Your Notes

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## Topic 2: The Patient Visit



**What do you think the health worker / volunteer could have done better to show fair practices and make the patient more welcome?**

Your Notes

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## 6. Planning

**Specific things you can use in your health centre to improve patient welcome and orientation.**



**Guide:** Please work in groups from the same or neighbouring health facilities to discuss the questions below and write your responses in the space provided below.



**What are my plans for improving the welcome and orientation of patients at my health centre?**

Your Notes

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**What will I need to do and plan in order to achieve these goals?**

Your Notes

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**How and when will I know if my plans are working?**

Your Notes

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### Summary Box – The patient visit

For reference for learners

- Health workers and patients have different perspectives or views of the world.
- Putting oneself in the shoes of a patient is a powerful way to understand how a patient experiences the health centre as an organisation with unspoken 'rules'.
- There are many reasons why patients have to wait a long time.
- There are key steps that can be taken to help patients benefit fully from a visit to the health centre and to improve how health workers feel.
- These include steps that improve the welcome of patients at health centres; the orientation of patients at health centres and steps that make sure that patients are seen fairly.

## FUTURE SELF-OBSERVATION ACTIVITIES

This module is the last structured feedback from self-observation activities. You can continue learning in this way and meeting together once a month to give feedback. You can do this amongst yourselves at your health centres or come together with colleagues from neighbouring health centres.

Continue to increase your own awareness by observing one skill at a time, and decide on how you want to change. You might also ask a colleague to observe you, and give you feedback - perhaps on how you ask questions, on how you listen, or any other skill you want to work on. This is a very good way to learn – when you trust the colleague, and the colleague is using constructive feedback.

Further self-observation activities are included below for you to try out over the next couple of weeks. Continue to make notes on your observations and enjoy the learning!

It won't be long before you will get better and encouraging responses and reactions from your patients and colleagues!



## FUTURE SELF-OBSERVATION ACTIVITY

### **Introduction**

It is a good practice to continue with your self-observation activities and self-awareness building. It is important to always use your 'antennae', 'observer', or 'invisible friend' to help you maintain your self-awareness about how you interact with others.

Repeat the self-observation activity below once every several weeks to help you reflect on and maintain your good communication skills.

### **Activity: Reflect on your goal**

Focus on your communication skills to a 'whole'. For a few days, reflect generally on your goal as a health worker, and about what kind of professional you want to be, and how you see yourself. Use of power is common in all professional work. However, if we use power without being aware of what we do, and why we do it, it can result in problems - and in us not doing our job well. We can upset colleagues, and miss the right diagnosis for the patients. In our training course we did not have time to deal with the issue of power specifically, but you can now do this yourself, using the skills you have learnt about observing yourself, looking at the effects of your communication, and reflecting on the outcome.

Look at your normal pattern when diagnosing and advising the patient and reflect on the following questions.

### **Do you sometimes find that you want to do as follows:**

- Show the patient you are a good professional?
- Show him that you are the one who knows what the problem is, and what to do (rather than listen to his ideas about what is wrong)?
- Show him you have the power, and that he should respect you?
- Expect him to follow your advice, because you have the expertise (and regardless of how you act towards him)?
- Establish a dialogue and a common goal with the patient?

### **What effect or impact does it have, when you choose different options, on:**

- Your communication with the patient
- The outcome of your interaction with the patient
- How you feel about yourself and the service you provided

Make notes in your notebooks and compare with your responses from previous self-observation activities.

Reflect on how well you are now communicating. Also reflect on how you use power in your work with patients, and with colleagues. Decide on changes you want to make, to become the professional whom you will be proud of.

**Also discuss your successes and challenges with your colleagues. Your learning will be more effective if you discuss you observation and questions with your colleagues.**

**You may want to ask a colleague to observe you and give feedback on how you communicate. Remember to use the guideline on constructive dialogue from Self-Observation Activity #1.**

Future Self-Observation Activities



Conclusion

# CONCLUSION

**Purpose:** To close the PCS 04 training and receive any questions or address any questions in the parking lot.



**Any comments or questions you may have about what was covered today?**

*Your Notes*

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*Answers to parking lot questions*

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*Thank you for participating today!*

*Sharing your experience and insight has been very helpful and informative.*

*Please use the Learner's Manual regularly to review what you have learned.*

*Discuss any challenges with your colleagues; they will be most helpful for finding solutions to problems and challenges at your health centre.*

*Goodbye.*



## The ACT PRIME Study

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Infectious Disease Research Collaboration, Uganda.  
ACT Consortium, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, UK.

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