



This information sheet is fifth in a series of nine, which cover three elements towards understanding and achieving health literacy. It aims to enhance health literacy for health professionals in the clinical environment.



## using the teach-back technique

Use the teach-back technique to communicate with clients with low health literacy.

### what is the teach-back technique?

The teach-back technique is a tool that service providers can use when communicating with clients who have low health literacy. It assists service providers improve client comprehension.

#### Steps in the teach-back technique

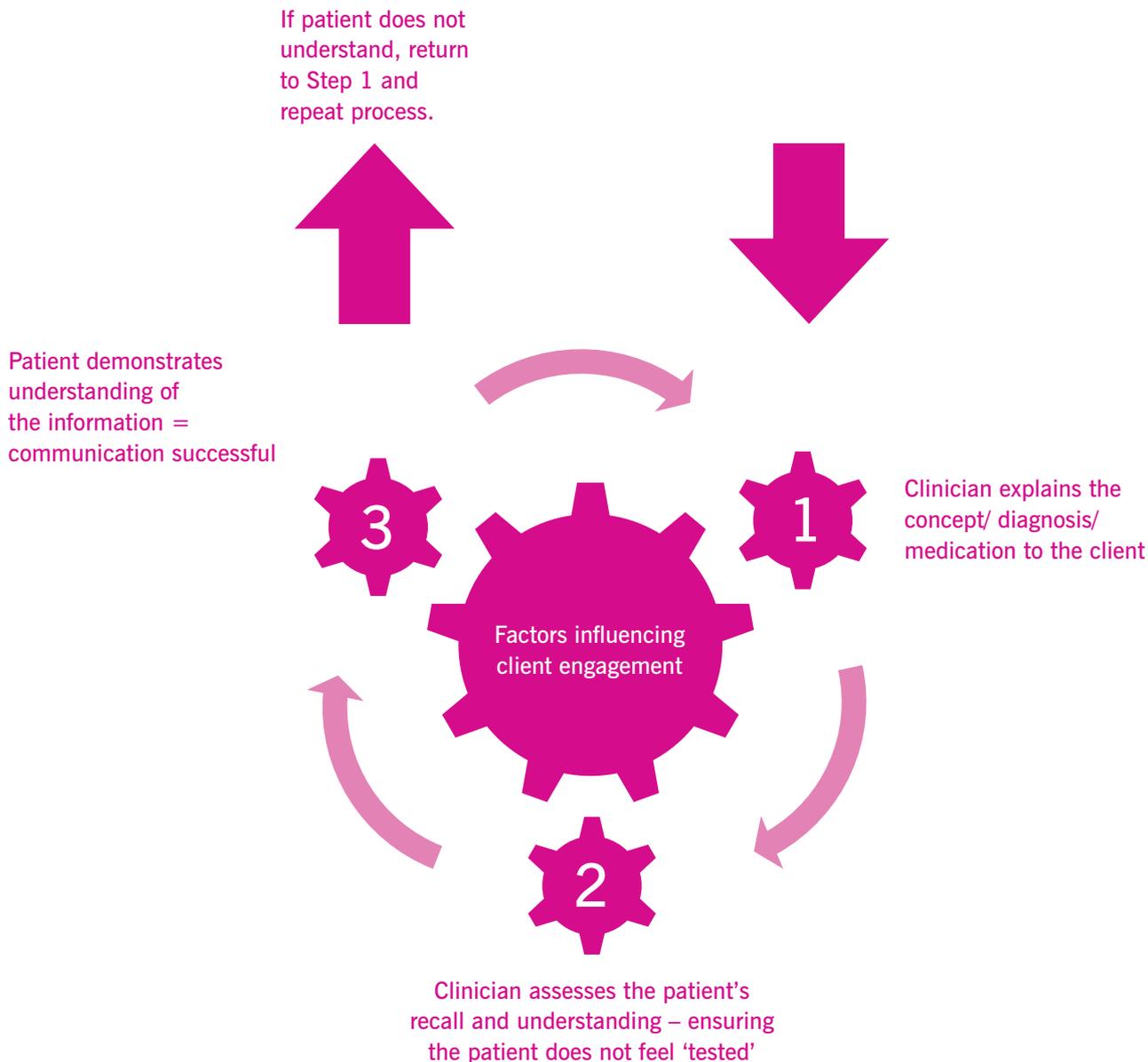
1. Explain one concept of a diagnosis or treatment plan to the client
2. Then assess the client's recall and understanding by asking the client to explain what you said
3. Repeat the process until the client can demonstrate they have a satisfactory understanding of the information
4. Introduce the next concept

#### Key elements for using teach-back

- Be mindful of the amount of information conveyed at one time. The information should be broken up into small chunks so it can be relayed easily and avoid confusion
- Use correct phrasing so that the client doesn't feel like they are being tested

## Good practice example

A GP is finishing her consultation with a patient and is adjusting the patient's medication. She uses the phrase 'I want to be sure that I explained your medication correctly. Can you tell me how you are going to take this medicine?' She emphasises that she is merely asking in order to do her job correctly.



### Other information sheets in this series

- 1 - What is health literacy?
- 2 - Assumptions in the communication encounter

#### Individual health literacy

- 3 - Measuring health literacy
- 4 - Verbal communication

#### Health service providers

- 6 - Planning, monitoring and evaluating for health literacy
- 7 - Supportive systems for health literacy

#### Health systems

- 8 - Written communication
- 9 - Social determinants of health and health literacy