

## PUTTING A PATIENT AT EASE

Before discussing important lifestyle changes with a patient, it is important to put the patient at ease. Sensitive topics can be broached more easily if the patient feels relaxed and comfortable.

**Nurse:** Hello, Mr. Kings. I wondered if I could have a chat with you about your blood pressure management before you go home.

**Patient:** Hello Grace. Yes, sure.

**Nurse:** Great. I'll just grab a chair. Now, you've had a bit of shock with your blood pressure, haven't you?

**Patient:** Yeah, you're right. I had no idea. I mean I was feeling a bit more tired than usual, and my wife said she noticed that my face was a bit flushed. The thing is that I never thought about blood pressure.

**Nurse:** That's probably why they call it the "silent killer". For most people, the only symptom they have of hypertension is high blood pressure itself.

**Patient:** Like you say, it's come as a bit of a shock. So, what do I have to do when I go home? What should I watch for?

**Nurse:** Remember yesterday we went through the sort of lifestyle changes I'd like you to look at?

**Patient:** Yes, I've got all the information about the *Stop Smoking* service, and I've started on the nicotine patches. The dietician spoke to me yesterday about a healthier diet. My wife even went out and bought a cookbook! We'll both start the exercise program here at the hospital. Was there anything else?

**Nurse:** I hope the recipe book was for you. I can see you cooking up a storm in the kitchen.

**Patient:** I don't know about that. I don't think my wife would agree with you.

**Nurse:** You did well to remember all the information. It's a lot to take at once and I'm really pleased that you're fired up and really to go. The only other thing that we need to talk about is your blood pressure itself. It would be a good idea to buy a small blood pressure monitor and take your blood pressure regularly. That way you can keep an eye on it yourself. It puts you in charge of your own health. I think that's important, don't you?

**Patient:** Yeah, you're right. It's much better that way.

*What is the topic of their discussion and why is it important?*

**Grace uses several informal expressions to create a friendly and relaxed relationship with the patient. Match the expressions from the dialogue to their meanings and use each expression in a sentence afterwards.**

- |                           |                          |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Have a chat            | a) Monitor               |
| 2. A bit of a shock       | b) I'm going to sit down |
| 3. A bit flushed          | c) Ruddy/red complexion  |
| 4. Watch for              | d) Take notice of        |
| 5. I'll just grab a chair | e) Discuss               |
| 6. Fired up               | f) Enthusiastic          |
| 7. Keep an eye on         | g) Unpleasant surprise   |

## **PUTTING A PATIENT AT EASE**

### **Give a rationale for the following situations:**

- Sit at the same level as the patient.
- Make positive responses whilst nodding your head.
- Don't make judgemental comments.
- Use humor to establish a good rapport with your patient.

### **SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE**

- What strategies do you use for putting a patient at ease?
- What difficulties have you encountered with anxious patient?
- What role does cultural sensitivity play when putting a patient at ease?