

Case Study 2 – Mary.

Mary is an asthmatic visiting the doctor about an ankle injury.

DOCTOR: Your ankle is now firmly strapped so it should be well supported, allowing that sprain to heal. While you're here, can I mention the influenza vaccine to you? You are asthmatic, so I wondered if you would consider getting vaccinated this year. **What do you think about it?**

MARY: I haven't had the flu for the last two years, so I really don't see the point of being vaccinated.

DOCTOR: You think that because you've not had influenza for the last two years that means you won't get it this year.

MARY: Yes. I'm lucky. I don't usually get the flu.

DOCTOR: Well, what do you think about reconsidering? You're asthma continues to be an issue for you. **How many times in those two years have you had trouble breathing or a prolonged cough?**

MARY: Three or four times, I guess. But that's not linked to the flu, is it?

DOCTOR: The risk of complications due to influenza is higher for asthmatics. Your airways are already more sensitive and if you get influenza they can become inflamed making breathing harder. **What would you do to make sure you stay healthy through the winter months?**

MARY: I wrap up warm and eat healthily. It's made sure I've not had the flu last year or the year before.

DOCTOR: That's fair enough and I totally understand your point. I guess what I'm trying to do is to make you aware of the things that could affect your health and that can be avoided. Lots of people are affected by influenza and end up stuck in bed for days and yet the vaccination can stop this from happening. **What impact would having influenza have on your life?**

MARY: I understand your concerns. If I'm honest then I guess I'd miss a few days of work. I couldn't really afford that right now.

DOCTOR: So with that in mind, how do you feel now about getting the vaccination?

MARY: I suppose I have to admit that your suggestion is a sensible one. What's the process?

DOCTOR: Great. So what you're saying is you can see the link between your asthma and the vaccination. I'm pleased you want to do something about this and it's something we can do for you today.

RAISING THE ISSUE

GAINING PERMISSION

OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS

REFLECTIVE LISTENING /
LISTENING WELL

OPEN ENDED QUESTION

OPEN ENDED QUESTION

EXPRESSING EMPATHY

OPEN ENDED QUESTION

OPEN ENDED QUESTION

AFFIRMATION &
SUMMARISING

The Doctor 'raises the issue' in a non-confrontational manner and 'gains permission' to carry on with the conversation: **"While you're here, can I mention the influenza vaccine to you?"**

Open ended questions are used throughout the conversation, ensuring that the flow of the chat is not shut down with awkward yes or no answers:

"What do you think about it?"

"What would you do to make sure you stay healthy through the winter months?"

"What impact would having influenza have on your life?"

Empathy is shown and there is no 'data dump' trying to change the patient's mind:

"That's fair enough and I totally understand your point."

The Doctor finishes the conversation well, affirming the positive choices and summarising what has taken place. **"Great. So what you're saying is you can see the link between your asthma and the vaccination."**