



Utilizing the FORD Method

How to Kickstart a Conversation with Your Patients

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Struggling with engaging your patients to communicate more than one-word answers? Consider an alternative to starting with the latest lab results. The FORD Method is a technique that acts as an ice breaker or conversation starter, and works with anyone you want to build rapport and establish trust with. It's research-backed and FORD is built on the premise that we all have similar priorities in our lives.

Family

Did you grow up around here? Is it just you and your wife at home? How's your family doing? How old are your kids?

Occupation

What do you do for a living? What takes up most of your time these days? What line of work are you in? How did you get into that line of work? How long have you been doing that?

Recreation

What do you do for fun? What do you do on the weekends, or when not at home? Do you have any hobbies? Where's the most interesting place you've ever traveled? If you could go anywhere on your next trip, where would it be?

Dreams/Goals

What's on your bucket list? Where do you see yourself in 5 years? Have you ever tried doing something like that for a living?

Helpful Tips

- Decide which FORD questions you use based on who is in front of you. Ask the questions you're comfortable asking.
- Focus on their answers and ask follow-up questions.
- Find some common ground between you and your patient.
- Reflect back what you hear.
- Be an active listener – there's a difference between listening and waiting for your turn to talk.

Worried about having enough time to incorporate this into your appointment? Here are two advantages:

- 1) Answers to the rest of your questions may come easier and more complete – saving time in the long run.
- 2) Work becomes more interesting!

Give it a try with your next session and see how it works for you. It's a skill that takes practice like anything else – the more you use it, the easier it becomes.