

GP reflective learning log – Clinical case review (Example 1)

List of population groups to choose from: People with vulnerabilities, People with long term conditions and disability

Suggested capabilities links (from actions and reflections)

Communication and consultation skills

Title: Tele-text telephone consultation

1. Brief description

During a duty day I noticed VH, a frail, elderly gentleman was on the list requesting a call back. The telephone number had a code in front of it. I was aware VH was very hard of hearing. The telephone number took me through a text telephone service. I witnessed the use of the text telephone system and conveyed my questions via an operator. VH in turn answered the questions. VH was concerned he may have had a recurrence of his piles and was keen for something to help. We had a brief conversation on the telephone. I became acutely aware that I needed to ask short and simple questions that could be conveyed via a text. Having never seen VH with a similar problem, and as I couldn't see a recent documentation of treatment for haemorrhoids, and I knew that it was harder to communicate over the telephone, I arranged to see him to further assess face to face.

1. Describe how your actions and approach link to the GP capabilities

It was interesting to experience the text telephone system. I have now had experience of using a different communication modality. I was able to adapt the language that I used to take into consideration his individual needs. I was able to manage the consultation effectively with the patient through using the text telephone interpreter, which required me to be organised and structured.

3. Reflection: what will I maintain, improve or stop?

When asking questions via an operator it is important to be precise with the questions. It made me consider the importance of each question I asked, to discriminate what the underlying problem was. I felt it was clinically appropriate to ask VH to come to the surgery for a further assessment. For some patients it is appropriate to take a full history over the telephone; however for others it is more appropriate and easier to take full history face-to-face, such as this patient. I will continue to build up my experience of using the text telephone system as well as improving communication with patients using different modalities. Overall, I felt this telephone consultation and the process of the consultation was successful.

4. What learning needs have you identified from this event?

I would like to gain experience of using a translation telephone line (something we don't use regularly in my current practice). I would also like to develop further strategies to communicate effectively with patients who have a loss of hearing – should they present alone, or with a signer.