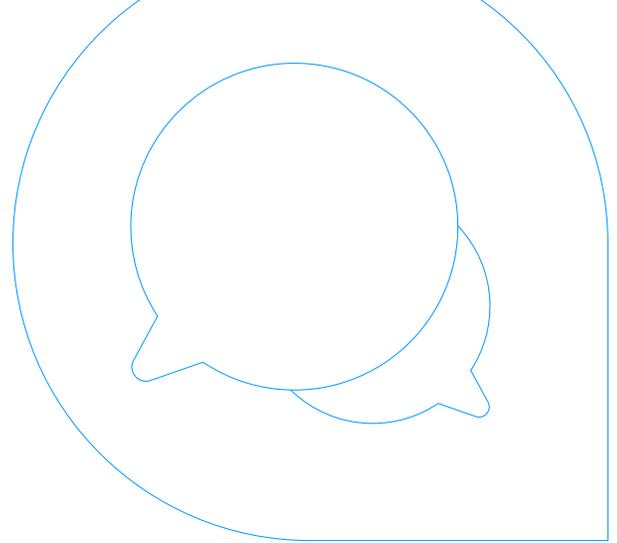


# words are powerful.

A truly conscientious selection of words can make an impact on the acceptance and effectiveness of your healthcare communications.

**Procter & Gamble Personal Health Care conducted research on what are appropriate and relevant word choices for use in healthcare communications.**



## words to use

### **caring**

The healthcare professional demonstrates responsibility, offers straight answers, shows empathy, and gives patients the desired attention.

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### **listen**

The healthcare professional follows up with probing questions and offers options that are available when describing a condition. He/she also recognizes patients' knowledge and treats patients with respect.

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### **well-being**

The healthcare professional helps me "get back to normal" and provides specific directions, answers or solutions for the patient's condition.

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### **respect**

This word can be perceived in two ways: respect for the healthcare professional (recognition for his or her knowledge) and respect for the patient (the healthcare professional is honest, provides advice and acknowledges their concerns as being important).

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### **confidence**

Patients view "confidence" as closely aligned to satisfaction with the healthcare professional. Also, confidence does not exist without the healthcare professional listening to and showing respect for the patient.

## **words to lose**

### **take your medicine**

Patients can perceive this phrase as insulting and demeaning if the patient understands why he or she is taking the medicine and does not need a reminder to take it.

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### **consequences**

Patients can view this word as "bad things will happen" or that there is a price to be paid and it was probably the patient's fault.

*Focus on the positive and help patients to understand the benefits of following advice.*

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### **restore**

Patients can understand this word to mean "restoring health to the way it used to be," which they feel is unrealistic since "we all are going to age."

*A better approach might be to use words like; feel better or improve.*

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### **change**

Patients perceive "change" as a neutral or negative word but view it to mean something incumbent upon them (i.e., requiring change from them).

*Providing options or choices can help patients to make 'changes' needed to improve health.*