

# 10 Elements of Competence for Using Teach-Back Effectively

## What is teach-back?

- A way to make sure you, the healthcare provider, explained information clearly. It is not a test or quiz of patients.
- Asking a patient (or family member) to explain in their own words what they need to know or do.
- A way to check for understanding and, if needed, re-explain, and check again.
- A research-based health literacy intervention that improves patient-provider communication and patient health outcomes.<sup>1</sup>

➤ For more information, visit

<https://www.ahrq.gov/patient-safety/reports/engage/interventions/teachback.html>

1. Use a caring tone of voice and attitude.
2. Display comfortable body language and make eye contact.
3. Use plain language.
4. Ask the patient to explain back, using their own words.
5. Use non-shaming, open-ended questions.
6. Avoid asking questions that can be answered with a simple yes or no.
7. Emphasize that the responsibility to explain clearly is on you, the provider.
8. If the patient is not able to teach back correctly, explain again and re-check.
9. Use reader-friendly print materials to support learning.
10. Document use of patient response to teach-back.



<sup>1</sup>Schillinger, 2003