

Taking a Health History

Nursing

The order of a nursing history, and where the patient's own account belongs.

Structure the interview; let the patient tell it in their own words first.

1

Open the conversation

Introduce yourself, state the purpose, agree the time available.

2

Presenting concern

An open question, then silence long enough to be answered.

3

History and medicines

Conditions, surgery, allergies, everything taken including bought.

4

Function and daily living

Mobility, continence, sleep, nutrition, senses, support at home.

5

Social and psychological

Work, housing, carers, mood, culture, beliefs, priorities.

6

Summarise back

Repeat what you heard and invite the correction.

Educational reference. Use an interpreter rather than a family member where language differs, in line with local policy on interpreting.