

**12<sup>th</sup> November 2024**  
**UIPP – B2 – Picking Up the Patient’s Cues**

Think about the following questions:

1. What cues may we notice in a patient's body language?
2. What cues might we notice when a patient speaks?
3. Why is it important to pick up a patient's cues?

**From the OET Speaking Assessment Criteria Glossary...**

B2	Picking up the patient's cues	Patients are generally eager to tell us about their own thoughts and feelings but often do so indirectly through verbal hints or changes in non-verbal behaviour (such as vocal cues including hesitation or change in volume). Picking up these cues is essential for exploring both the biomedical and the patient's perspectives.
		Some of the techniques for picking up cues would include <b>echoing</b> , i.e. repeating back what has just been said and either <b>adding emphasis</b> where appropriate or <b>turning the echoed statement into a question</b> , e.g. "Something could be done...?". Another possibility is <b>more overtly checking out statements or hints</b> , e.g. "I sense that you are not happy with the explanations you've been given in the past"

"...more overtly checking out statements or hints."

Picking up the patient’s cues can involve noticing changes in body language, word choice and tone of voice and then checking out these hints with the patient.

**Listen to the differences in the patient’s answers:**

Medical professional: "So, laparoscopy is often called 'keyhole surgery' and we make three small incisions and use a camera to see inside as we perform the surgery"

Patient: "OK"

**Understood, unsure or worried?**

**We can check the patient’s response to unsure/concerned cues:**

- "I sense that you are..."
- "You seem..."

**We can also encourage a patient by responding to their positive cues:**

Medical professional: "We would like you to try a high-protein diet for a couple of months. Do you think you can manage that?"

Patient: "Ok yes, I can try that"

Medical professional: "That's good to hear"

**The following prompts are all taken from the patient cards in OET Speaking roleplays.**

**What do you think the patient would do or say and how would you respond?**

- Ask about recovery times and scars after the surgery. Your father had surgery and has a long scar on his abdomen.
- You have little understanding of asthma and ask your doctor: "What is asthma? Will Matthew always have this condition?"
- You are frightened that Matthew might have a severe attack and you seek advice on how to manage Matthew's asthma.
- Ask when you can return to work (you are an office worker sitting at a desk all day) and whether the condition will make you an invalid for the rest of your life.
- What can you do to reduce the risk of further attacks?
- Argue that you need a quick fix to the toe because you need to get back to work, the antibiotics obviously aren't working.
- Ask what epilepsy is and what causes epilepsy.
- Explain your concern that your daughter may have other convulsive seizures and that you need to know what you should, or should not, do.