

14<sup>th</sup> July 2025

OET Speaking – Input – Relationship Building

**Starter:**

1. What do you think should be included in your introduction to the roleplay?
2. How does the fact that the patient is known or unknown change this?

**Key things to consider?**

A. Indicators of <b>relationship building</b>	
A1	initiating the interaction appropriately (greeting, introductions, nature of interview)
A2	demonstrating an <b>attentive</b> and <b>respectful attitude</b>
A3	adopting a <b>non-judgemental</b> approach
A4	showing <b>empathy</b> for feelings/predicament/emotional state

CRITERIA	HOW CAN WE MEET IT?
<p><b>A2 – Demonstrating a respectful and attentive attitude</b></p>	<p><b>Ask for permission:</b>            “I would like to talk about your diet, if that’s ok with you?”            “Now I would like to discuss your treatment plan. Is that ok?”</p> <p><b>Active listening:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phrases or sounds: I see / Mmm / Right / Sure / Ok</li> <li>• Echoing (we repeat key words from the patient) - “Back pain” / “For a week”</li> <li>• Repeating and summarising - “Ok so you told me that...”</li> <li>• Body language – eye contact, looking at the patient, tilted head, nodding, appropriate facial expression</li> <li>• Avoid interrupting</li> </ul>
<p><b>A3 – Adopting a non-judgmental approach</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Avoid commenting on the patient’s condition or symptoms in a critical way</b></li> <li>• <b>Non-immediate rebuttal:</b>            “I decided to Google my symptoms and I think I have cancer”            “I completely understand why you decided to look on the internet, but there is a lot of information on there and not all of it is accurate.”</li> <li>• <b>Avoid judgement based on religious, moral, or cultural factors</b></li> <li>• <b>Generalise when we talk about sensitive issues such as diet, weight, sex, habits or appearance</b>            “Many patients with your condition find it really beneficial to lose weight”</li> <li>• <b>Avoid using direct language like imperatives and modal verbs</b>            “You have to quit smoking”            “It would be beneficial if you quit smoking”</li> </ul>
<p><b>A4 – Showing empathy for feelings/predicament/emotional state</b></p>	<p><b>Normal empathy:</b>            “That must be difficult for you”            “I can understand how painful it must be”            “I’m sorry to hear that”</p> <p><b>Try to be specific with empathy:</b>            “I’m sorry to hear about <u>your headache</u>”            “I can understand how painful <u>your backache</u> must be”</p> <p><b>Serious empathy:</b>            “I’m <u>so</u> sorry to hear that”            “That must be <u>really</u> difficult for you”            “Please accept my condolences”            “It sounds <u>really</u> upsetting”            “I can only imagine what you are going through”</p>

<b>A. Indicators of relationship building</b>		
A1	Initiating the interaction appropriately (greeting, introductions, nature of interview)	Initiating the interview appropriately helps establish rapport and a supportive environment. Initiation involves greeting the patient, introducing yourself, clarifying the patient's name and clarifying your role in their care. The nature of the interview can be explained and if necessary negotiated.
A2	Demonstrating an attentive and respectful attitude	Throughout the interview, demonstrating attentiveness and respect establishes trust with the patient, lays down the foundation for a collaborative relationship and ensures that the patient understands your motivation to help. Examples of such behaviour would include attending to the patient's comfort, asking permission and consent to proceed, and being sensitive to potentially embarrassing or distressing matters.
A3	Demonstrating a non-judgemental approach	Accepting the patient's perspective and views reassuringly and non-judgementally without initial rebuttal is a key component of relationship building. A judgemental response to patients' ideas and concerns devalues their contributions. A non-judgemental response would include accepting the patient's perspective and acknowledging the legitimacy of the patient to hold their own views and feelings.
A4	Showing empathy for feelings/predicament/emotional state	Empathy is one of the key skills of building the relationship. Empathy involves the understanding and sensitive appreciation of another person's predicament or feelings and the communication of that understanding back to the patient in a supportive way. This can be achieved through both non-verbal and verbal behaviours. Even with audio alone, some non-verbal behaviours such as the use of silence and appropriate voice tone in response to a patient's expression of feelings can be observed. Verbal empathy makes this more explicit by specifically naming and appreciating the patient's emotions or predicament.