

Coaching higher-activated patients: Medication adherence

Phreesia



Use this guide to coach higher-activated patients (PAM Levels 3 and 4) on the health risks of deviating from their treatment plan and help them overcome barriers that can make it difficult to follow through.

Build knowledge:

Help the patient understand the risks of not following their treatment plan as instructed.

- Work with the patient to create a list of all treatments they are taking, including prescriptions, over-the-counter medications, vitamins and supplements. Ask them to explain the timing, dosage directions and any special instructions, such as whether they should take their medications with food, as well as the purpose of each medication. Clear up any misconceptions or knowledge gaps.
- Explain why it's important to follow the instructions. Discuss the health risks of not taking enough medication, taking too much medication or suddenly stopping their medication altogether.

Build skills:

Provide guidance on overcoming barriers that make it difficult to comply with their treatment plan.

- Brainstorm situations that can cause a patient to deviate from their plan, such as cost, forgetfulness, uncomfortable side effects, travel or stress. Help the patient proactively overcome challenges or access issues. For example, you might discuss ways to simplify getting refills or reduce the cost of prescriptions by using financial assistance programs.
- Encourage the patient to keep a diary of all medication side effects. Ask them to rank the severity of each symptom on a 1-10 scale and to track how long symptoms last (including which side effects are frequent vs. less frequent and easier vs. more difficult to tolerate). Let them know that their care team may be able to help with side effect management.

Build confidence:

Work together to strive for full adherence to their treatment plan.

- Ask a patient to identify which techniques they use, or plan to use, to follow their plan. If they don't have any ideas, suggest medication adherence tools like using multi-day pill dosing containers, downloading reminder apps or asking loved ones to help them stay on track.
- Make a list of healthy ways that patients can reward themselves for adhering to their treatment plan, such as engaging in a favorite relaxation activity. Encourage them to self-reward for fully adhering to their treatment plan for one week—and later, for one month—as they make following their plan a habit.

