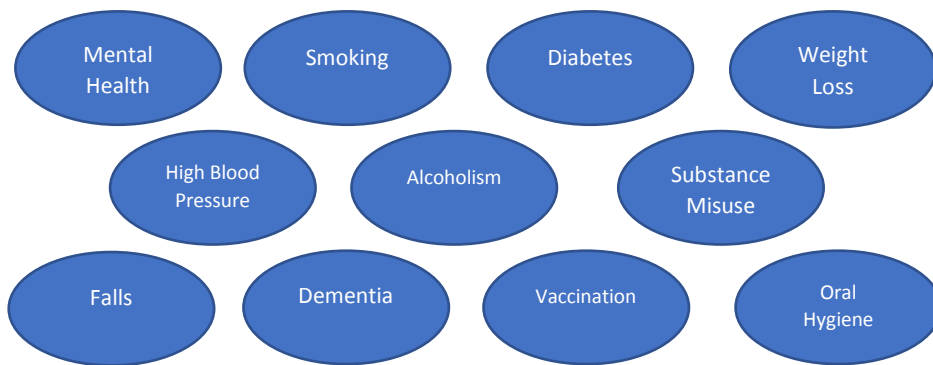


Preceptorship Public Health Initiative: New Graduates

As Orthoptists, Public Health conversations form part of our everyday interactions with patients. We should aim for this to be embedded naturally, rather than this being an ‘add on’ in our conversations. We should identify opportunities to have Healthy Conversations within clinics, more so now than ever, owing to the impacts of Coronavirus!

What conversations might we have with patients?

Some conversations are ‘easier’ to have with patients than others – i.e. a patient with Thyroid Eye Disease and discussing the benefits of stopping smoking, due to the evidence linked with our Orthoptic Knowledge. In these scenarios, we may feel more comfortable having this conversation. However, Public Health covers a large spectrum of issues...



What Is Public Health?

- Allowing patients to *think* about their current Health and Lifestyle
- Being Encouraging and Supporting
- Signposting

What Public Health is NOT

- Pressuring Patients to Change
- Counselling
- Knowing all the Answers
- Lengthy Conversations
- Reciting lots of statistics to patients

How To! Cue, Conversation, Conclusion

Cue – A hook which enables the patient to raise a subject with the health professional or vice versa.

- Example: A patient presents with an accommodative spasm and appears stressed.
- Example: There is a strong smell of alcohol on the patient’s breath as they speak to you.

TASK: Can you think of any more Cues which may present themselves in clinic?

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Conversation – The brief intervention – Give the opportunity to ‘explore’ the change and think about the positive impact it can have. You can ‘Pop in a Positive’! Patients may have a negative view if they have tried to make this change before and not been successful.

- “It’s great that you’re thinking about taking that first step to making a change.”

- “It sounds like you have been successful before, even if it only has been for a few days.”
- “There are some great online resources that can help you learn about managing stress.”

TASK: What positive phrases can you think of to form part of the conversation?

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Open Discovery Questions are a useful way to encourage patients to actively think about a change in their life and explore how they may begin this change.

- What support do you need?
- How would you like to approach this change?
- If this is something you would like to change, would you like to tell me about it?

TASK: Can you think of any more Open Discovery Questions which could be used?

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Conclusion – Signpost to follow up/specialist support services. Knowing what is available in the local area is important to determine a patient’s outcome. Keep it brief, up to date and relevant!

TASK: Which services are available to signpost patients to? Research your local support.

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Real Examples

① A patient with acquired downbeat nystagmus presented to the Orthoptic Clinic.

Cue: She expressed that she had found the Coronavirus Lockdown period particularly challenging.

Conversation: “What sort of support did you have in place prior to the Coronavirus lockdown and in what ways did you find these helpful?”

“Occupational Therapists were helping me to fill in forms for work-related adjustments which started to make me feel more comfortable and positive about going to work, but this had stopped due to the lockdown. I had been attending a support group for people with Brain Injuries to talk about similar problems.”

“It’s brilliant that you found this support so useful before lockdown, let’s see if we can restart these avenues of support now.”

Conclusion: A letter to the GP detailing the diagnosis and management of her condition with an additional line of the patient’s request to access additional local support. The Occupational Therapy Team were also copied into this letter, at the patient’s request. The patient felt as if she had made progress by coming to the Orthoptic appointment and was very grateful that support could resume.

② A patient has an acquired 6th Nerve Palsy and uncontrolled blood pressure.

Cue: Using the time we cut and fit prisms onto glasses, we could use this an opportunity to ask if a patient has any questions.

Conversation: “So, how common is double vision?”

Discuss reasons behind the patient’s double vision or give them the opportunity to think about their overall blood pressure control. “It’s a really positive step that you’re thinking about controlling your blood pressure. If you are looking to resolve/improve the double vision, would you like to tell me about how I can help?”

Conclusion: The patient felt they would benefit from visiting their GP to access a home Blood Pressure Monitor. This was documented in the notes and at the follow up visit, the double vision had completely resolved. The patient felt much better in themselves, with much improved BP control.

Record Interactions - Have a Go!

TASK: Identify opportunities within Clinic and ‘Have a Go’. You should document in the notes when a Healthy Conversation has taken place so the next Orthoptist may discuss outcomes with the patient at the next visit. They may discuss if any positive changes have been made to a patient’s lifestyle and if further support and signposting is required.

	<u>Date</u>	<u>Cue</u>	<u>Conversation</u>	<u>Conclusion</u>
1.				
2.				
3.				

The more we attempt to have these conversations, this improves our confidence as clinicians in raising delicate issues. Patients should consult their GP if they fall or are attempting to lose weight.

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