

I've got multiple sclerosis, primary progressive, and so it is progressive and it does slowly get a bit worse. I came originally with a little bit of trepidation. I wasn't too sure how I would fit in, what the staff would be like, whether it would be to my benefit. Bad communication is when you see someone who recommend certain things for items you've got, an OT, someone like that and doesn't really put themselves into your shoes.

Don't forget. Patients may feel anxious about coming into a healthcare environment for the first time. Try and ascertain what a patient's exact needs are by asking them.

They look to you and they see a solution, but they don't discuss it with you. For example, as you could see now I lean a bit to the wrong side. That's because my problem is down this side and it's weaker and the muscles haven't been built up enough for me sit straight. Well, an OT came round and recommended a certain cushion for me to sit on. It was terrible, it did my back in because she never discussed it with me. I don't need a cushion. I need something to support me up the side. That's bad communication. For goodness sake, speak to the person you are actually seeing and get from them exactly how they feel, not assume that they need this or that and do it and it's the wrong thing.

Don't forget, you should always discuss treatment options with your patients. Don't assume you know best.

I enjoy being with people who care about me, and it's a two way thing, the patient and the staff.

The very first time we went in together, Adrian was joking and laughing, and it went on from this sort of, you know, loving atmosphere for about 10, 15 minutes and then he went into doctor mode. But it was lovely. It was just he felt totally at ease. Because obviously you're nervous coming in first time about what's going to happen or whatever. But the atmosphere was brilliant. And then after about 15 minutes in it, then he went, his face changed, he went into doctor mode. And for me, it made me feel relaxed.

And that's the art of dealing with patients. It's not just you and them, it's you conversing with them. It's you dealing with their problems without them almost realising their problems. I find that important. As soon as you come in, would you like a drink? You know, how's your week been? Things that are very simple, very elementary. But, that's important. Show you care and show you listen, and when you're speaking to people, assume that they know what they're talking about and that although they are patients they have a voice that should be heard.

Don't forget, your patients have a voice, and it must always be heard. Communication is a two-way thing after all.