



THE PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANT SERVICE EXCELLENCE

MODULE 2: JUNE 2015

Getting the most out of

The **WWHAM questions** provide a solid framework for finding out more about a customer's condition. But it's important to know how to ask these questions effectively



OBJECTIVES

After studying this module, assistants will:

- Understand how to use the WWHAM questions
- Be able to communicate better with customers.

Everyone in the pharmacy team should be familiar with the WWHAM questions. They provide a basic structure to use when communicating with customers and trying to obtain the necessary information so that you can offer advice and/or a product recommendation.

You will sometimes need to get information from a customer who may be reluctant to talk, feeling anxious, worried or even embarrassed. The WWHAM questions can help to keep the conversation focused and enable you to deliver first class customer service.



This module is suitable for all members of the pharmacy team who wish to increase their knowledge of communication skills and customer care. This module has been endorsed with the NPA's Training Seal as suitable for use by pharmacy teams as part of their ongoing learning. This module can also form part of your Team Tuesday training.

THE WWHAM PATHWAY

The WWHAM questions are intended to form the basis of your conversations with customers, whether you are responding to their symptoms and recommending a product or they have asked for a medicine by name.

Use this pathway to help you review the way you use WWHAM.

01

LISTEN

Listen carefully to the customer's initial query, as they will often provide you with answers to some of the WWHAM questions before you ask them. You can then fill in the gaps in your knowledge by asking the remaining questions.



03

THE WWHAM QUESTIONS

W

Who is the medicine for?
It may not be for the customer.

W

What are the symptoms?
You may need to ask a few more questions so that you can fully understand the symptoms.

H

How long have you had the symptoms?

Many minor ailments clear up within a few days.

A

What action has already been taken?

Have they tried any medicine or treatment without success?

M

Are you taking any other medication?

It is important to ask about prescribed medicines as well as any OTC and herbal remedies as some can interact with each other.

02

THE WAY YOU SAY IT

The WWHAM questions should not be asked robotically or in any particular order. The key is to get the customer talking and build the questions into the conversation naturally. Speak clearly and slowly at the right volume and speed.



04

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Once you have the customer's information, repeat back the key points to check that your understanding is correct. This shows that you are listening and interested in what the customer has said and allows you to correct any misunderstandings. Never make assumptions.

06

FINAL WORDS

As you are finishing the conversation and putting any products into a bag, take the opportunity to pass on important dosage or usage instructions about the medicines, and ask the customer if they would like any further information.



PRACTICE POINT

Ask your pharmacist to show you your pharmacy's sales of medicines protocol as it will cover the WWHAM questions and who you should refer to the pharmacist.

05

RECOMMEND OR REFER?

Once you have established all of the appropriate information, you will be in a better position to either recommend a suitable product or refer to the pharmacist. If a referral is required then let the customer know why in a polite and reassuring tone so that you don't alarm them. When speaking to the pharmacist about a customer, make sure you are away from other customers and that you pass on all of the information.