

# Let's Take 5

TO ADDRESS DRIVERS OF HEALTH

## Take 5 Conversation Starter

Addressing drivers of health (DOH) is a critical step to improve patient health, care outcomes, costs, physician burden, and the physician-patient relationship.

**Physicians are encouraged to use and share the *Let's Take 5 Conversation Starter* to prepare their teams to have empathetic and empowering conversations with patients about DOH.**



### 1 PREPARE AHEAD OF TIME

Patients are more inclined to share their circumstances in a safe and non-judgmental environment. When preparing, keep in mind your patient's perspective and consider if they may be facing issues of shame, trauma, or fear. Before your team member has a conversation, they should identify local resources that can help them overcome issues related to DOH.

#### TIP:

It is essential to consider the cultural context, health literacy, and language needs of your patients and their families. The CDC's [Think Cultural Health](#) program offers free resources to better communicate with culturally and linguistically diverse patients.

### 2 BUILD A RAPPORT

The process starts with building the relationship with the patient, explaining the process, and asking permission to have the conversation. Always give a simple written and verbal explanation for the screening. This explanation should include how personal information will be used and shared, as well as options for next steps.

#### TIP:

Introduce yourself, avoid standing over the person, and maintain eye-contact.

### 3 EMPLOY EMPATHY

Gather information in a manner that allows the patient to feel understood and respected, using such approaches as active listening and asking about the patient's priorities.

#### TIP:

An active listening approach can help to understand the meaning and intent of what patients are communicating, as opposed to listening to only what is said. Related tactics to gain a better understanding include identifying hesitations and asking open-ended, close-ended, and reflective questions related to the challenges.

*"It sounds like getting help paying the utilities bill is what is most important right now?"*

### 4 ENCOURAGE CONFIDENCE

It is essential to focus on not only challenges, but also positive qualities to promote confidence.

#### TIP:

An asset-based approach is helpful and focuses on a patient's strengths and areas of interest. It can also identify and leverage resourceful organizations, such as faith-based groups, to build on existing resources.

*"You've been very resourceful getting through a hard situation. You've shown a lot of grit and creativity."*

### 5 OFFER IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS

Refer patients to the appropriate community-based organizations or local support services, such as women's groups or employment agencies. The conversation can end with a summary, listing of next steps for an action plan.

#### TIP:

One method for DOH conversations is motivational interviewing, which involves encouraging patients to pursue solutions by prompting them to say why and how they can make change happen. This approach allows patients to set goals, based on their circumstances and what they think is possible.

*"If this change happened, how would things be different? What would your life look like in a few years?"*

By discussing DOH and integrating evidence-based approaches into clinical care settings, we can help reduce the effects of DOH on patients' overall health and wellbeing. Learn more at <https://physiciansfoundation.org/letstake5>

