Teach-Back

AHRQ
Guide to Improving Patient Safety in Primary Care Settings by Engaging Patients and Families

Speaker

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No financial conflicts of interest to disclose.

Objectives

- Review the key threats to patient safety in primary care settings and interventions to engage patients and families to improve safety

- Describe the role and value of teach-back in improving patient safety

- Identify strategies for implementing the teach-back process in primary care settings

Guide – Project Goals

- Meaningful engagement with patients and families in ways that impact safety, not just quality

- Based on evidence

- Tools that are easy to use

- Tools for practices who have not done much in this area

Key Project Deliverables

- Environmental Scan
- Four Case Studies of Exemplar Practices
- Four Interventions to Improve Safety by PFE
- Final Guide

Key Threats & Promising Interventions

Threats to Patient Safety

- Breakdowns in communication
- Medication management
- Diagnosis and treatment
- Fragmentation and environment of care

Promising Interventions

- Shared Decisionmaking
- Patient and Family Advisory Councils (PFAC)
- Team-based Care
- Medication Management
- Family engagement in care
- Structured communication tools

Patient & Family Engagement in Primary Care
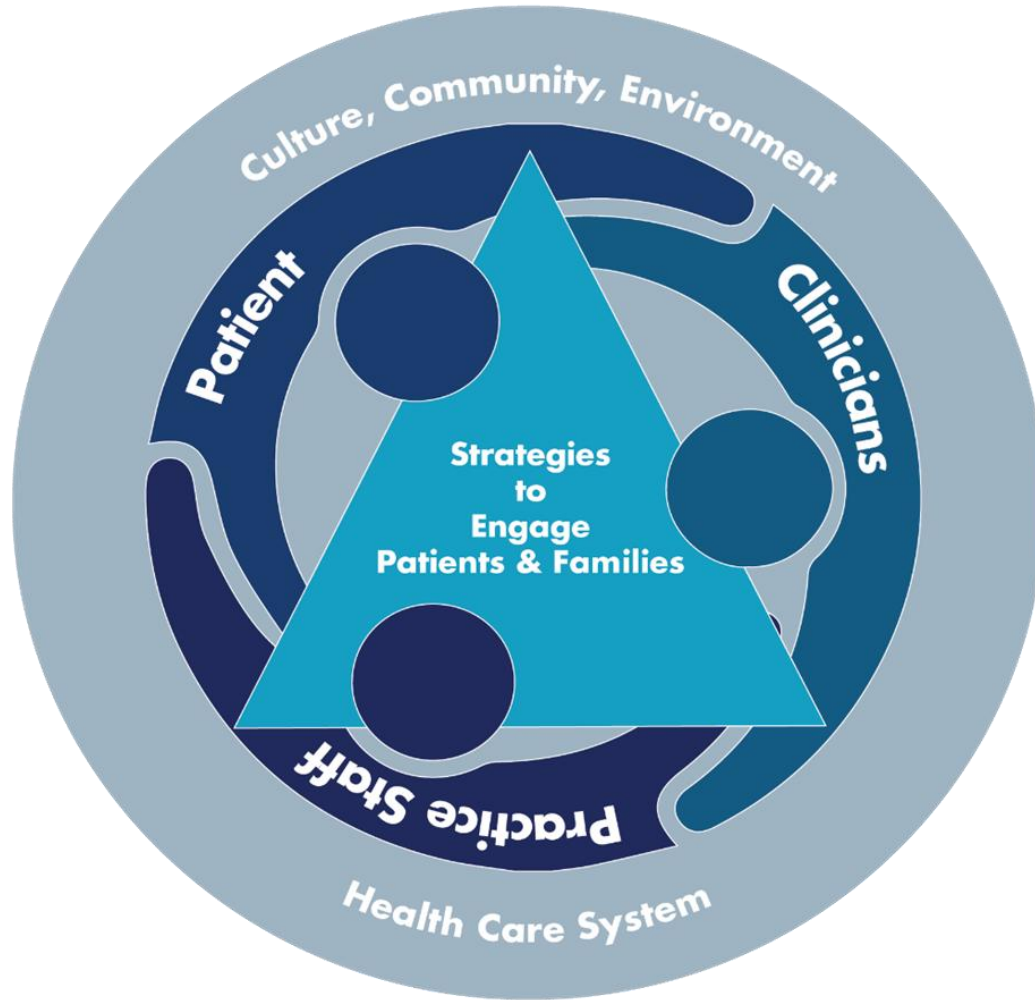
Four Interventions

- Teach-Back

- Be Prepared to be Engaged

- Medication Management

- Warm Handoff

What is Teach-Back?

- Evidence-based Health Literacy Intervention
- Communication approach for shared decision-making
- Ask your patients to "*Teach it Back*"

Why Use Teach-Back?

Medical Information
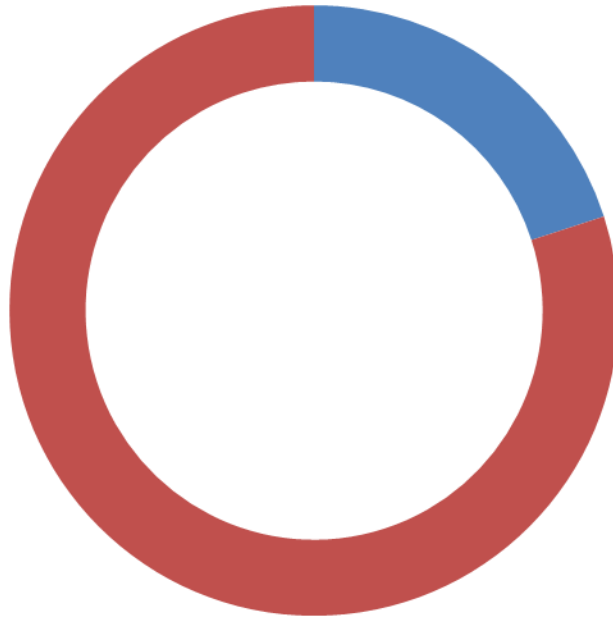
- Understood
- Forgotten

Teach-Back Quick Guide

→ Use teach-back for ALL patients.
→ Start with most important message.
→ Limit to 2-4 key points.
→ Use plain language.
→ Rephrase message until patient demonstrates clear understanding.

Examples of Teach-Back Starters

→ "Just to be safe, I want to make sure we are on the same page. Can you tell me…"
→ "I want to make sure that I explained things clearly. Can you explain to me…"
→ "Can you show me how you would use your inhaler at home?"

Use Plain Language

Use these words	Avoid these words	Use these words	Avoid these words
reduces swelling	anti-inflammatory	heart doctor	cardiologist
blood thinner	anticoagulant	skin doctor	dermatologist
take before meals	take on an empty stomach	doctor who treats diabetes	endocrinologist
take after meals	take on a full stomach	stomach doctor; doctor for digestion problems	gastroenterologist
high (low) blood sugar	hyper(hypo-)glycemic	doctor for women	gynecologist
high (low) blood pressure	hyper(hypo-)tension	doctor for the brain, spine, and nervous system	neurologist
fats	lipids	cancer doctor	oncologist
overweight	obese	eye doctor	ophthalmologist
weak bone disease	osteoporosis	lung doctor	pulmonologist
not cancer	benign	joint, bone, and immune system doctor	rheumatologist

1. Kessels RP. Patients' memory for medical information. J R Soc Med 2003;96(5):219-22. PMCID:PMC539473.
2. Anderson JL, Dodman S, Kopelman M, et al. Patient information recall in a rheumatology clinic. Rheumatology 1979;18(1):18-22.
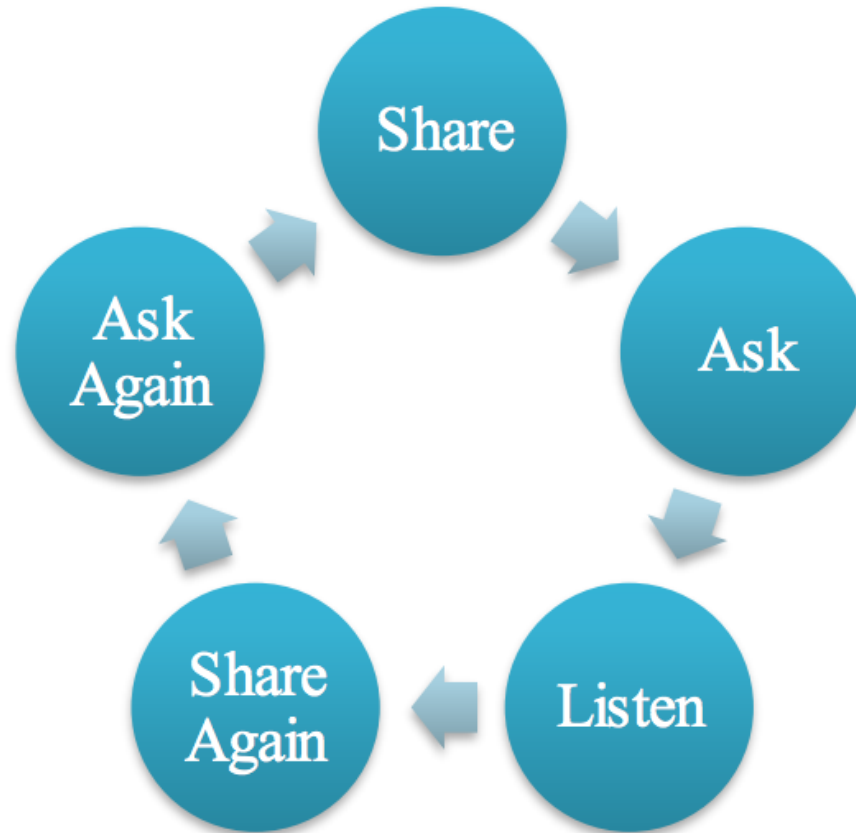
When Is Teach-Back Used?

Teach-back can be used when you explain:

- A new diagnosis
- Medication need and proper use
- Home care instructions
- Recommended behavior changes
- Treatment options
- Treatment plan
- Use of a new device
- Next steps

Teach-Back Process

How is Teach-back Different?

"Just to be safe, I want to make sure we are on the same page. Can you tell me…"

"Can you show me how you would use this inhaler at home?"

"I want to make sure that I explained things clearly. Can you explain to me…"

Making Teach-Back Successful

- Use teach-back on **all** patients.

- Start with the most important message.

- Focus on 2 to 4 key points.

- Use plain language. No medical jargon.

15

Teach Back Materials

Now Available!
Visit the AHRQ project website.

[Link to Teach-back materials on AHRQ project website](#)

Getting Started with Teach-back

The Guide to Improving Patient Safety in Primary Care Settings by Engaging Patients and Families

Implementation Quick Start Guide

Teach-back

Step 1
- Identify a Champion and get Leadership Buy-in

Step 2
- Train all team members

Step 3
- Begin Implementation

Step 4
- Introduce teach-back to patients

Step 5
- Evaluate and refine
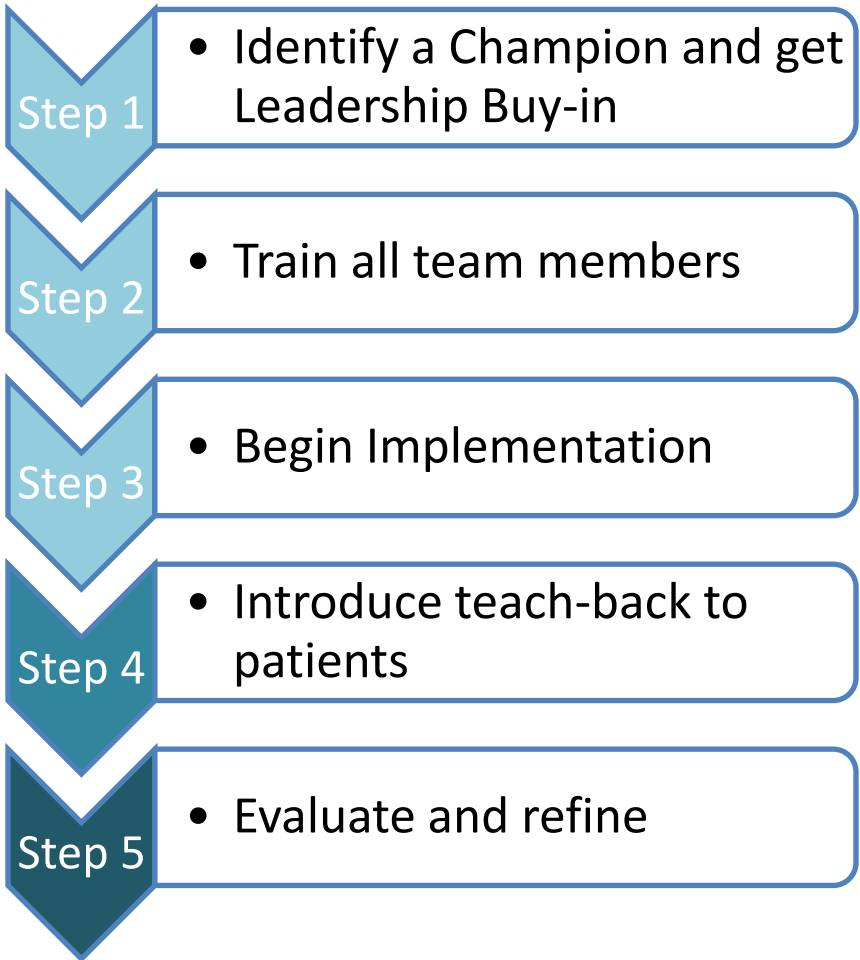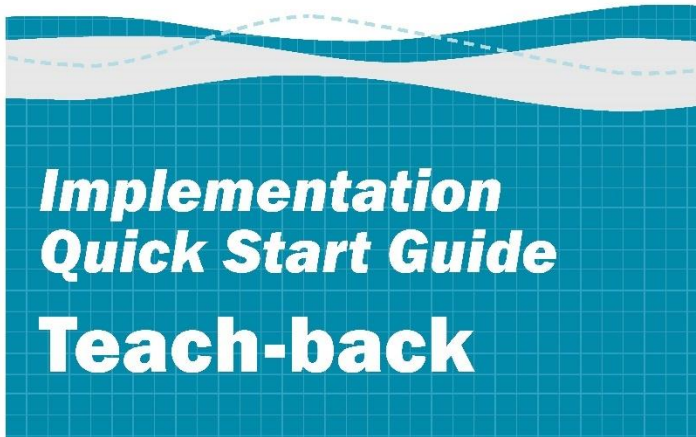
Support for Training
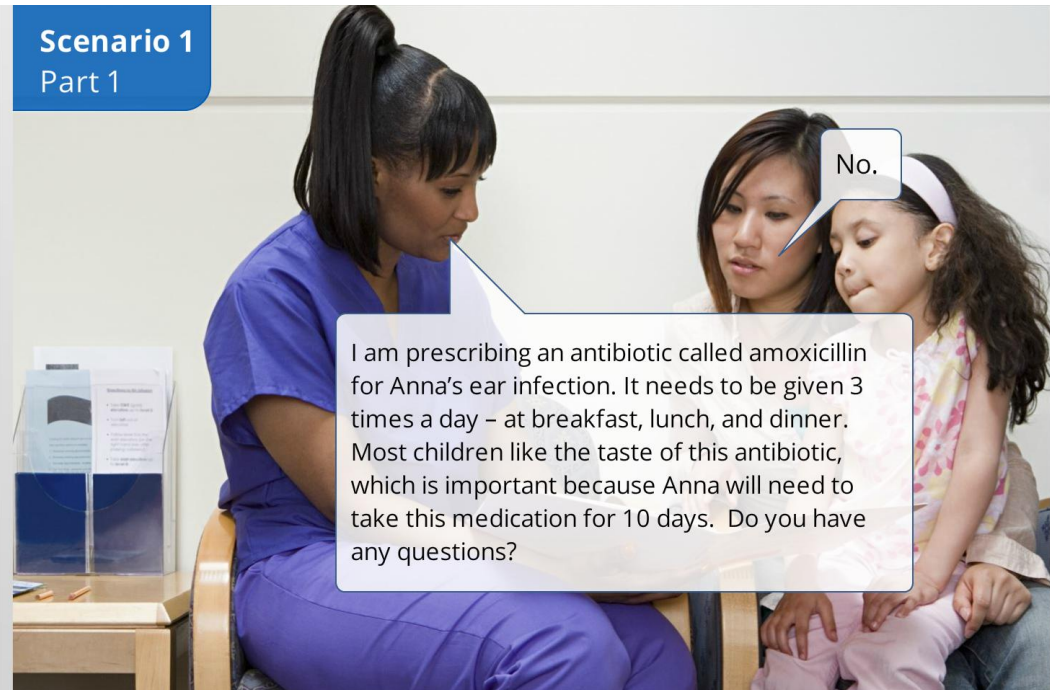
- Interactive module
- Case-based learning
- Takes about 15 minutes to complete
- Supportive materials and resources on AHRQ website

Introduce Teach-back to Patients

- Reinforce the message "this is not a test" but a "safety check"

- Use patient materials and underline or circle important points.

- Use pictures or draw diagrams.

- Ask open ended questions & use plain language

A Patient's Guide to Teach-Back "

What is teach-back?

Teach-back is a way for you to tell your provider (a doctor, nurse, or other person you see at your health care visit) in your own words what you understood.

Teach-back IS—

- A way to make sure you and your provider understand each other.
- A chance for you or your family to ask questions during your visit.
- A safety check that your provider wants to do with you.

How does it work?

Your provider will ask you or your family to tell him or her in your own words what they have told you (to *teach it back* to him or her).

Teach-back IS NOT—

- A test of what you know.
- Something to be nervous about.

When is teach-back used?

Teach-back is used whenever you get important new health information. For example, it may be used with —

- A new medicine or changes to your old medicine.
- Home care instructions.
- Instructions for use of a new device.
- Next steps in your care.
- Other important health information.

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Using Plain Language

USE THIS NOT THAT

✓ High blood pressure   χ Hypertension

✓ Not cancer   χ Benign

✓ Heart doctor   χ Cardiologist

✓ Skin doctor   χ Dermatologist

Guide Resources to Support Plain Language

Use Plain Language

Use these words	Avoid these words
reduces swelling	anti-inflammatory
blood thinner	anticoagulant
take before meals	take on an empty stomach
take after meals	take on a full stomach
high (low) blood sugar	hyper(hypo-)glycemic
high (low) blood pressure	hyper(hypo-)tension
fats	lipids
overweight	obese
weak bone disease	osteoporosis
not cancer	benign

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skin doctor	dermatologist
doctor who treats diabetes	endocrinologist
stomach doctor; doctor for digestion problems	gastroenterologist
doctor for women	gynecologist
doctor for the brain, spine, and nervous system	neurologist
cancer doctor	oncologist
eye doctor	ophthalmologist
lung doctor	pulmonologist
joint, bone, and immune system doctor	rheumatologist

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Evaluate Progress

Are You Using Teach-Back?

To help us understand how our practice is doing in implementing and using teach-back, please answer this short set of questions. Answering the questions is anonymous and not being used to judge individual performance. It is only being used to see how we are doing as a group.

1. Have you reviewed any teach-back materials?
   ○ Yes   ○ No

2. Do you typically use the teach-back process with your patients?
   ○ Yes   ○ Sometimes   ○ No

3. Are the patient teach-back materials available to patients?
   ○ Yes   ○ No   ○ Don't Know

4. Is the use of teach-back encouraged in your practice?
   ○ Yes   ○ No   ○ Don't Know

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Always Use Teach-back!

Conviction and Confidence Scale

Fill this out before you start using teach-back, and 1 and 3 months later.

Name: _____

Check one: ○ Before   - Date: _____

   ○ 1 month   - Date: _____

   ○ 3 months   - Date: _____

1. On a scale from 1 to 10, how **convinced** are you that it is important to use teach-back (ask patients to explain key information back in their own words)?

Not at all important   Very Important

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

2. On a scale from 1 to 10, how **confident** are you in your ability to use teach-back (ask patients to explain key information back in their own words)?

Not at all confident   Very Confident

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

3. How often do you ask patients to explain back, in their own words, what they need to know or do to take care of themselves?

   ○ I have been doing this for 6 months or more.

   ○ I have been doing this for less than 6 months.

   ○ I do not do it now, but plan to do this in the next month.

   ○ I do not do it now, but plan to do this in the next 2 to 6 months.

   ○ I do not do it now and do not plan to do this.

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22

Considerations with Older Adults

- Mild or moderate hearing impairments
  - Use a lower voice pitch
  - Speak naturally and distinctly
  - Minimize background noise

- Decline in information processing speed
  - Slow down the rate of delivery
  - Limit new information given at each visit

Considerations with Children

- Include the child in developmentally appropriate conversations

- Ensure both the child and the caregiver understand

- Use visual aids to support communication

Considerations with Language Diversity

- Offer medical translation services

- Use both verbal and nonverbal cues

- Use visual aids to support
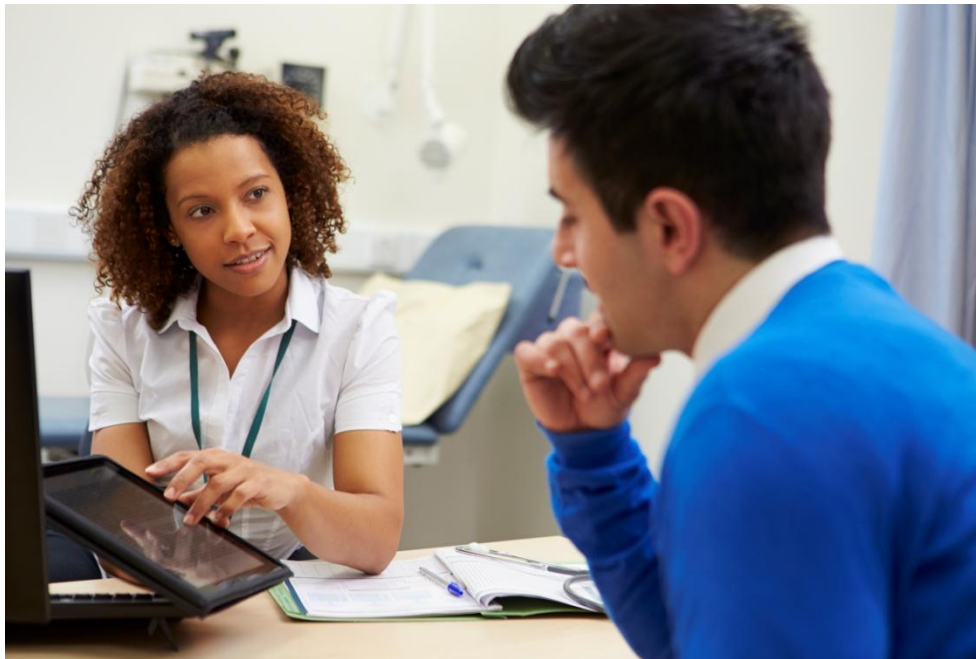
How can the AHRQ PFE Guide help practices achieve success?

Etool

Shared Decision-Making

Health Literacy

Patient Activation

Medication Management

Support for Patient Voices
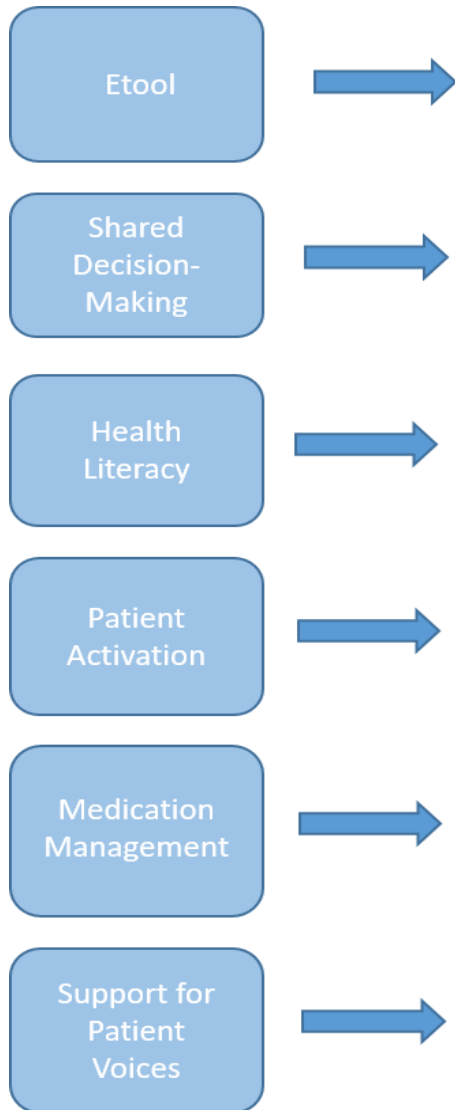
PTN PFE Performance Dashboard Domains

Domain 1: Internal PFE Structure

Domain 2: Spread to Practices

Domain 3: PFE Success Stories

Domain 4: Innovation
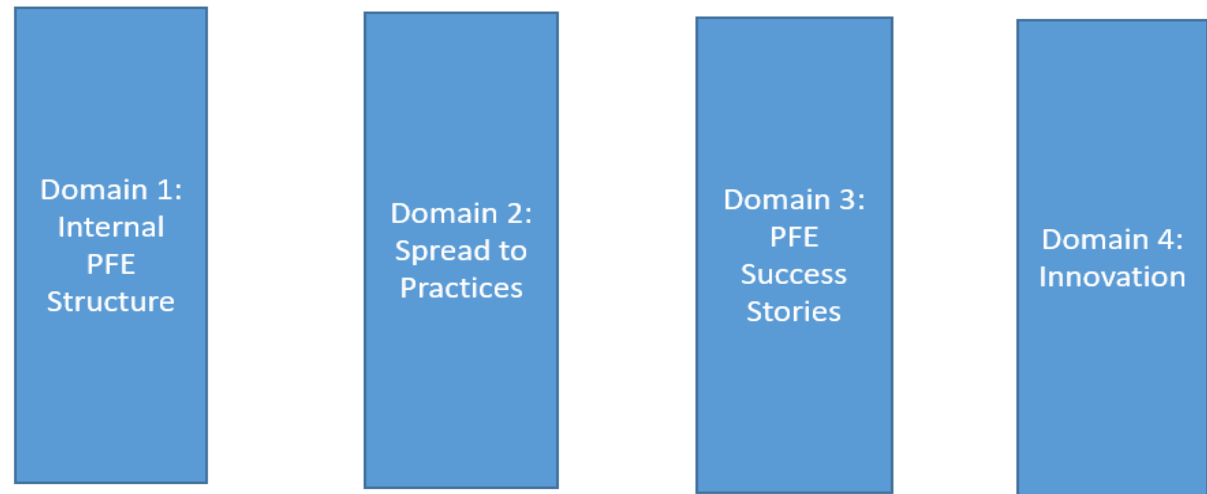
Practice Assessment Tool PFE Metrics

Metric 4: Practice can demonstrate that it encourages patients and families to collaborate in goal setting, decision making, and self-management.

Metric 5: Practice has a formal approach to obtaining patient and family feedback and incorporating this into the QI system, as well as the strategic and operational decisions made by the practice.

Why Should I Use Teach-Back?

- Improved patient outcomes

- Safer care and adherence

- Fewer calls to re-explain care plan due to misunderstandings

- Improved patient and clinician satisfaction

- Increased incentive payments

  - Public and private performance measures

  - Patient satisfaction scores

Questions?

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