

Scripts for Talking to Neurotypical People

The core strategy for communicating effectively with neurotypical individuals, particularly in situations where you're the patient and they're in a position of power like a doctor, focuses on these key points:

1. **Respect and Acknowledgment:** Always start by showing appreciation or respect for the other person's input. This softens the conversation and makes it less likely for them to get defensive.
2. **Redirecting Focus:** If the topic isn't relevant to your concerns, politely ask to refocus on what matters to you. Stay specific and clear about what you need.
3. **Clarification Without Criticism:** When something doesn't make sense or hasn't been fully answered, ask for clarification in a non-confrontational way. Avoid suggesting they're wrong; instead, focus on needing further understanding.
4. **Addressing Subtle Hurt:** If something is subtly hurtful, frame it as seeking clarification rather than accusing the other person. This keeps the conversation constructive.
5. **Alignment on Priorities:** If you feel the conversation is veering off course, ask to pause and ensure both of you are aligned on the same goal or concern.

The overall goal is to advocate for yourself while maintaining a respectful tone, minimizing the chance of the other person feeling personally attacked or defensive, especially in power dynamics like a doctor-patient interaction.

See specific scripts/examples on the next page

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Situation	Short Script	Longer Script with Example	Example
Topic feels uninteresting	I appreciate that. Could we focus on [specific concern] instead?	I appreciate you sharing that. I'm just wondering if we could focus more on [specific concern], as that's something I'm particularly worried about. For example, instead of talking about diet, could we talk more about my energy levels?	For example, instead of focusing on my overall lifestyle, could we talk about my specific symptoms, like my energy levels?
Not answering my question	Thanks! I still have a question about [specific concern].	Thank you for that explanation. I still feel unsure about my original question, which was more about [specific concern]. Could we revisit that? For example, I was asking about side effects of this medication, but we've been discussing dosage.	For example, I was asking about the side effects of this medication, but we've been discussing more general issues.
Doesn't make sense	Could you explain that again? I'm not quite following.	Thanks for explaining that. I'm still having a bit of trouble understanding—I'm sure I'm missing something, but could you explain that again so I can make sure I'm on the same page? For example, could you clarify how this test relates to my symptoms?	For example, could you clarify how this test relates to the symptoms I'm having? I'm trying to connect the dots.
Subtle hurtful comment	I'm sure you didn't mean it that way, but that comment felt a bit off to me. Could you clarify?	I know this probably wasn't your intention, but I felt a little discouraged after that comment. Could you clarify what you meant so I don't misunderstand? For example, when you said 'most people already know that,' it made me feel unsure.	For example, when you mentioned 'most patients already know that,' it made me feel unsure, and I'd like to clarify to avoid misunderstanding.
Not on the same page	I think we're seeing this differently. Can we check we're on the same page?	I value everything you're saying, and I think I may not be fully grasping the whole picture. Could we pause for a moment to make sure we're both on the same page? For example, it seems like you're talking about symptoms, but I'm focused on long-term management.	For example, I feel like you're talking more about my general health, but I'm trying to focus on managing this specific issue. Could we align on that?