

MEETING MY ILLNESS

- positive and negative experiences on facing up to illness and medication

The aim of the 'Meeting My Illness' exercise is for participants to write down their reflections on five questions about their illness and medication. Patients with a chronic condition often go round with lots of speculation about their illness and the medicine they take. This exercise enables participants to take the time to reflect on whether their experience should lead to action in future.



Approximately 15 minutes for reflection and jotting down thoughts, and at least 20 minutes for dialogue



Five cards with questions for each participant
Paper and writing implements



Individual written reflections
Group dialogue



If other questions are required, they are available in the 'Meeting My Health care Professional' exercise

STEP BY STEP

1. The educator introduces the aim of the exercise: That participants should think how they feel about their own illness and medication.
2. All participants get five cards with questions.
3. The educator may possibly say that participants should think for a while about the five questions and to jot down their thoughts either as a short story or as bullet points. If participants do not want to write anything, they can think about the questions and present their thoughts to the group orally.
4. Participants get about 15 minutes to write down their thoughts.
5. The educator asks whether a participant would like to start. A participant can now step forward and read the notes written on the card. The idea is not for everyone to say what they have written but to have their say if they wish.
6. The educator asks whether others would like to take a card and say what they have written.
7. The educator asks for more detailed answers and the group discusses participants' experiences.
8. The educator can decide whether to take all questions but depending on the time available and participants' wishes, the group may also just select the most relevant cards.
9. The educator may also decide to just give out a couple of cards and allow participants only to use them.
10. If the educator sees that an explanation of medical issues is required to deal with specific concerns, it is important that this is appropriate to participants' experience.
11. The educator can round off by asking participants what they could themselves do differently with respect to their illness and medication.