

CONNECTED CONSULTATIONS

Putting psychological strategies in practice to enrich consultations with parents of children with food allergies

Successful consultations are rooted in proven psychological theories. The goal of this infographic is to help you understand and apply those theories to further enhance your sessions with patients and their families.

THINGS TO CONSIDER AT THE BEGINNING OF A CONSULTATION:

- What might be causing parents anxiety?
- Do they understand your role in the management of their child?
- Do they have any pre-existing bias that may influence how they interact with you?



WHAT IS FRAMING?

- The way you present a topic—often called the “framing effect”—may influence how the family reacts to the information you provide and can play a role in the decisions they make.
- One of the most important aspects of a consultation is to ensure the family feels capable and confident that they can adhere to your dietary recommendations.

For example: “To ensure we make the best progress, we’ll make time to see you every week at our clinic for the next few months.”

vs.

“You’ll need to visit our clinic 52 times this year.”

WHAT IS SOCIAL PROOF?

- Social proof describes the psychological phenomenon where the actions and attitudes of the people around us influence our own behavior. The proof element is the idea that if other people are doing it or saying it, it must be correct.
- When families understand that others have used the same protocols you’re recommending, they’ll be reassured that they’re heading down the right path.

PUT PARENTS AT EASE



- **Share your prior experience** of successfully helping other children with food allergies.
- **Engage directly with the child** to show you’re focused on the patient, not a set of symptoms.
- **Identify and acknowledge how the family has been feeling** (not just the symptoms the child has been dealing with). Once they know you understand what difficulties they’ve been facing, they’ll feel confident your advice reflects the extent of their issues.

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MOTIVATION AND SUPPORT THROUGHOUT THE JOURNEY



Using these patient-focused interviewing techniques can help your families feel empowered and increase their confidence in applying your recommendation.

Use open questions and invite others to tell their stories in their own words.

Example: "Share with me what your experiences have been with your child's food allergy."

Affirm their emotions and concerns, and acknowledge their behaviors to help build confidence in their ability to change.

Example: "I appreciate you telling me about your child's symptoms. It sounds like..." and then repeat what you've heard.

Reflect the words they use to build trust and foster motivation to change.

Example: Paraphrase what you've heard, then ask if your summary is accurate.

To find out more

about how psychological strategies can help you to support parents of children with food allergies, watch our Connected Consultations e-learning resource, which has also been endorsed for CPD by The British Dietetics Association.*

* BDA endorsement applies only to the educational content of the learning activity.

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