

Open-Ended Questions

The NEXT level of curiosity

A Quick Note Before You Dive In 📌

These questions are not a script. Please don't memorize them, recite them, or try to sound "perfect."

Think of this list as training wheels for curiosity—not something to perform, but something to *practice*.

The real goal isn't asking the *right* question. It's showing genuine interest, listening without interrupting, and responding like a human— Listen with the intent to UNDERSTAND, rather than listening with the intent to reply.

Use your own words. Use your own personality. When you lead with common sense and real curiosity, patients feel it. They open up more. Trust builds faster. And conversations feel easier—for everyone.

Let the concept guide you, not the exact wording.

🔍 "Tell me more" — These keep the patient talking and signal *I'm listening*.

- "Can you help me understand that a little better?"
- "What's that been like for you?"
- "Walk me through that."
- "I'd love to hear more about that."
- "What else should I know?"
- "When you say __, what do you mean?"

“Why is that important to you?”

- “What makes that matter to you?”
 - “What’s most important to you about that?”
 - “How does that impact you day to day?”
 - “What would you like to be different?”
 - “Why does that stand out for you?”
 - “What would success look like for you here?”
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Emotion-based curiosity

These help patients feel *seen*, not examined.

- “How are you feeling about that?”
 - “What worries you most about this?”
 - “What’s been frustrating about it?”
 - “What’s your biggest hesitation?”
 - “What would help you feel more comfortable moving forward?”
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Clarifying without correcting

Perfect when a patient says something vague or emotionally charged.

- “When you say ___, what does that mean to you?”
- “Help me understand what you’re hoping for.”

- “Can you share what led you to feel that way?”
 - “What have you experienced in the past that shaped that?”
 - “What’s been your experience so far?”
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Future-oriented curiosity

These gently connect emotion to action—without pressure.

- “If we could solve this, what would that change for you?”
 - “What’s the outcome you’re hoping for?”
 - “How would this affect your confidence or comfort?”
 - “What would make this feel like the right decision for you?”
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Pro tip

Try ‘curiosity stacks’:

One open question → one reflection → one follow-up question

Example:

“That sounds frustrating.”

“Can you tell me more about what’s been hardest?”

That combo makes patients feel *heard*, not handled.