OSCE counselling checklist

An OSCE counselling checklist opens with the patient's agenda, explores what they know and want, offers advice with permission, and ends with a plan the patient chooses. This is our own practice list.

The checklist, step by step

1. Introduce yourself, confirm identity, say how long you have and ask what the patient wants from the conversation.
2. Ask what the patient already knows about the issue.
3. Explore their own reasons for change, and their worries.
4. Ask how ready they feel, in their own words.
5. Ask permission to share information.
6. Give information in short pieces, in plain words, and check understanding after each piece.
7. Offer the options, including doing nothing, and the pros and cons of each.
8. Ask the patient to say what they would like to do.
9. Agree a small plan, with a date for review.
10. Summarise, ask for questions, and offer written help or a service the patient can contact.
11. Thank the patient.

What candidates commonly forget

- Asking permission before giving advice.
- Letting the patient choose.
- Checking understanding.
- Giving the next step a date.
- Avoiding a lecture.

How to use this list

This is our own practice checklist. Exam bodies mark in their own way. Use it to build a routine, then say each step aloud as you do it. You can also practise with an AI patient on this site, and try one station free with no sign-up. For original examination stations, see the PLAB 2 stations list.

Common questions

What is the difference between counselling and advice?

Advice tells the patient what to do. Counselling helps the patient work out what they want to do, with your information.

Which guidance covers behaviour change?

NICE has guidance on individual behaviour change approaches, and on helping people to stop smoking.

Is this a marking sheet?

No. It is our own list for practice.

Sources

- NICE: Behaviour change, individual approaches (PH49)
- NICE: Tobacco, preventing uptake, promoting quitting and treating dependence (NG209)
- NICE: Shared decision making (NG197)

Checked 2026-11-13. Fees and rules change, so confirm them with the regulator before you book.