

Study Guide

Module 8: Clarify and Respect the Decision



This module focuses on **Step 4** of the vaccine conversation framework: closing the interaction in a way that preserves trust, honors autonomy, and leaves the door open for future health decisions.

1. Goals of Step 4

In this final stage of the encounter, your primary objectives are:

- **Facilitate action:** Move toward vaccination or a specific vaccine planning goal if the individual expresses readiness.
 - **Maintain the relationship:** Provide space to continue the dialogue in the future if the individual is not ready to vaccinate today.
 - **Demonstrate vaccine confidence:** Act as a steady, reliable helper while ensuring the person feels fully respected for their own decision-making role.
 - **Prioritize trust over numbers:** Recognize that preserving trust is more valuable than winning a single argument, as it ensures the patient won't "salt the earth" and avoid future medical care.
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2. Summarizing Change Talk

A summary in Step 4 is used to pull together the patient's own motivations for change (the "change talk") that surfaced during the conversation.

Template:

- **Opening:** "If I could sum up what you've shared here..."
- **The Content:** (Recap their values and concerns in favor of protection/change).
- **The Check-in:** "Did I get it all?" or "What, if anything, would you like to add?"

Examples:

1. **For a traveler:** "If I could sum up what you've shared – it sounds like you do have concerns about the measles outbreak, especially because you're planning to travel, and you really want to do what's best for your child's health. Have I got that right?"
2. **For general safety concerns:** "It sounds as though your son's health is very important to you, and you're concerned about the measles cases reported lately because you don't want to take unnecessary risks. Did I get that right?"

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3. For a "careful protector": "It sounds like you want to be certain you are protecting your son's health and you've done a lot of research because you want to feel confident in the decision you make today. What else should I know about your thinking?"
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3. Next Steps Language

After the summary, bridge the gap to a plan by asking: "**What, if anything, do you feel ready to do next?**".

- **If the patient is READY:**
 - "Sounds good. I do think that will really provide the best possible protection for your child."
 - **If the patient is NOT READY:**
 - "Okay, I can see that you're really thinking about this carefully. I appreciate you being open to having this conversation. I would be happy to talk about this again, especially if you come across more information that you're wondering about, if that sounds helpful."
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4. Autonomy-Emphasizing Statements

Use these variations to "knock on the door" of the decision while respecting the patient as the final authority.

1. "This really is **up to you.**"
 2. "No one can make you do this – **you're the decision-maker.**"
 3. "I **respect whatever decision** you make."
 4. "This is **absolutely your decision.**"
 5. "You are of course **welcome to think more** about it."
 6. "This is **100% up to you.**"
 7. "I **appreciate you being open** to having this conversation."
 8. "I can see you want to **make the best choice** for your family."
 9. "You're in the **driver's seat** on this one."
 10. "Whether you decide to vaccinate today or not, I **respect your role** as a parent."
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5. The Marie-Hélène Story

The Story: Marie-Hélène Étienne-Rousseau was a mother initially very hesitant about vaccines. After an MI conversation with neonatologist Dr. Arnaud Gagneur, she eventually chose to vaccinate her children.

The Turning Point: She specifically remembered the doctor telling her: **“Whether you vaccinate or not, I respect your decision as someone who wants the best for my kids.”**

Lessons Learned:

- **Respect is transformational:** Marie-Hélène called that single sentence "worth all the gold in the world".
 - **Acceptance lowers defenses:** When she felt accepted rather than judged, she was free to stop defending her hesitation and eventually move toward change.
 - **Planting a seed:** You may not "harvest the fruit" (get the shot) today, but handling a "no" with respect plants a seed for future visits.
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6. Reflection

Take a moment to write your thoughts on these two prompts:

- **How do you typically feel when patients decline vaccines at the end of a visit?**
(Common feelings: Frustration, failure, fear for the patient, or burnout).

- **How might the MI approach (being responsible for the *conversation* rather than the *decision*) help you handle this differently?** *(Think about MI as a "burnout shield" that redefines success as partnership and connection).*