

Study Guide

Module 4: Step 1 – Broaching the Subject



This module focuses on the first step of the **MI-Based Framework for Addressing Vaccine Hesitancy**: starting the conversation in a way that respects autonomy and builds trust.

1. What is Broaching?

Definition: Broaching is the act of transparently and neutrally introducing the topic of vaccines to a patient or client. It is described as "knocking on the door" of a conversation rather than forcing your way in.

Purpose:

- To state the standard of care or recommendation clearly without being forceful.
 - To issue an invitation for the patient to share their perspective or ask questions.
 - To prioritize **connection over correction** from the very start of the interaction.
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2. The Directing Style

In Step 1, it is important to distinguish between different communication styles.

- **Directing Style:** This is an authoritative approach where the provider tells the patient what is going to happen (e.g., "We'll give her the flu shot today").
 - **When to use it:** While often used in fast-paced clinical settings for "easy yes" situations, it can be unhelpful for hesitant patients.
 - **The Risk:** A directing style can trigger the "**fixing reflex**," causing the patient to push back with "sustain talk" (reasons not to change).
 - **The MI Alternative:** MI encourages a **Guiding style**, which states the recommendation neutrally and follows immediately with a question to respect patient autonomy.
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3. Three Sample Scripts

Use these scripts as a foundation for your own clinical conversations.

Script A: The Neutral Recommendation (Guiding Style)

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“At this appointment, we recommend four vaccines to protect against several illnesses — one oral, and three shots. Do you have any questions about those?”

Script B: The Medical Assistant Triage (Efficiency/Choice)

“At this appointment, we recommend four vaccines to protect against several illnesses. Did you want to talk to the doctor about those, or do you feel ready to go ahead with them?”

Script C: Broaching a Sensitive or Avoided Topic

“I see you haven’t gotten the COVID vaccine — could I ask how you’re feeling about that one?”

4. Practice Scenarios

Write your own broaching statement for each situation below. Remember to state the recommendation neutrally and follow with a question.

- 1. 6-month well-child visit:** (Hint: List the recommended vaccines and ask for thoughts).
 - *Your Statement:*

- 2. Adult flu shot in a pharmacy:** (Hint: Offer the recommendation as a standard of care).
 - *Your Statement:*

- 3. COVID booster with a hesitant patient:** (Hint: Use permission-asking language to "knock on the door").
 - *Your Statement:*

- 4. HPV vaccine with a teenager:** (Hint: Focus on long-term cancer protection and ask for their reaction).
 - *Your Statement:*

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5. **Parent who "wants to talk about it":** (Hint: Triage the conversation to allow for a deeper discussion with the doctor).
 - *Your Statement:*
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5. Key Phrases to Use

These "permission-asking" phrases ensure you aren't "spamming" your patient with unsolicited advice.

- "Could I ask what you're thinking about...?"
- "Would it be okay if we talk about vaccines today?"
- "Mind if we discuss those concerns?"
- "Would you like to talk to the doctor about those, or...?"
- "I noticed you have some hesitations — would you be open to sharing those?"