

Tailored Communication for Cervical Cancer Risk
Cognitive Affective Barriers Message Library

SAMPLE

I. RESPONSES TO ENCODING BARRIERS:

Standard Encoding Barrier Message

The more you know, the more you can do to prevent cancer of the cervix, HPV (Human Papilloma Virus) and to stay healthy. It's important to know what a Pap smear is, what HPV is, and why a doctor looks closely at your cervix during a colposcopy exam.

1. How well do you understand what it means to have an abnormal Pap smear?

An abnormal Pap smear means that some cells on your cervix look different from regular cells. This does not mean you have cancer of the cervix. But it does mean that you have some cells that could grow and change. Most changes in the cervix happen very slowly. These changes can almost always be treated so that you don't get cancer of the cervix.

2. How well do you understand what a colposcopy is and why it is done?

A colposcopy is a 15-minute exam that lets your doctor look closely at the cells on your cervix. The doctor does this exam with a colposcope. A colposcope uses a bright light and a special lens to make cells easier to see. The doctor will be looking for any abnormal cells on your cervix. The doctor will examine your cervix to see what type of cell changes are taking place and how best to treat those changes. In addition, the doctor may take a biopsy. A biopsy is when the doctor takes a sample of the cells on the cervix; you may feel some pinching. The sample is then sent to a lab to be looked at more closely under a microscope.

3. How well do you understand what a biopsy is and why you may need one when you have your colposcopy?

By taking a biopsy, doctors can look at your cells later under a microscope to find out more about the changes in your cervix cells. Taking cells out is called a biopsy. During the biopsy, you may feel some pinching or pricking, but it will not be painful.

4. How well do you understand what Human Papilloma Virus, or HPV, is or how you get it?

Almost all cancer of the cervix is caused by HPV. HPV is a common virus that is passed through sex or between a mother and her baby during pregnancy or delivery. In some women, the HPV virus causes changes in the cells of their cervix. These changes are not always cancer, but they can become cancer if not treated. If doctors see the type of cell changes that can grow into cancer, they need to remove those cells so they don't grow into cancer.

5. How well do you understand the connection between HPV and cervical cancer?

The changes that HPV makes in cervix cells sometimes go on to become cancer, if nothing is done. If doctors see the type of cell changes that can grow into cancer, they will give you a treatment that will remove those cells so they cannot grow into cancer.

II. RESPONSES TO EXPECTANCIES AND BELIEFS BARRIERS:

Standard Expectancies and Beliefs Barriers Message

What you believe about your cervical health and what you expect from your medical care is important. It can make a difference to your health. Follow-up exams can help your doctor take care of the changing cells on your cervix. Knowing that there are things you can do to prevent yourself from getting cancer will make it easier for you to come in for your scheduled colposcopy appointments and follow-up exams.

1. How much do you believe that having an abnormal Pap smear means you have cancer?

An abnormal Pap smear does not mean you have cancer. In fact, most women with an abnormal Pap smear do not have cancer. Most likely, you have changes in your cervical cells that need to be treated so that they will never turn into cancer.

2. How much do you believe that a colposcopy will help you?

In a colposcopy, the doctor looks directly at your cervix to see if there are any abnormal cells. To be sure, your doctor might take a small sample of cells to view under a microscope. This is called a biopsy. Both tests will help your doctor decide what treatment is best for you.

3. How much do you believe that there is nothing you can do that will change whether or not you get cancer?

You can prevent cancer of the cervix by coming for your colposcopy and follow-up appointments. When your doctor says you need a colposcopy and follow-up appointments, you can take action to keep yourself healthy by coming to the clinic.

4. How sure are you that you will be able to keep your colposcopy appointment?

These appointments are the way to prevent cancer and protect your health. Think about ways you were able to keep doctor appointments or other dates that were important to you in the past. Ask others for help.

5. How sure are you that you will be able to do what your doctor tells you to do after your colposcopy?

You will be asked to come back for at least two more appointments over the next year to get treatment and more screening. These appointments are very important for your health.