

# Discussing PROMs in the consultation room

## Checklist for healthcare professionals

- ✓ Explain why completing PROMs is important and how this process will be carried out.
- ✓ Prepare the conversation based on the PROMs results.
- ✓ Always discuss PROMs results!
- ✓ Discuss PROMs results in a safe space.
- ✓ The healthcare professional with a bond of trust (nephrologist, nurse, etc.) has the conversation with the patient.
- ✓ Give structure to the conversation and take the initiative on sensitive topics.
- ✓ Acknowledge the “complete picture”: what is (not) going well.
- ✓ Prioritize together the 3-4 most important topics.
- ✓ Invite the patient to discuss their needs and experiences in relation to what is important to them in life.
- ✓ Check your interpretations and conclusions.
- ✓ Explain symptoms: causes, consequences, and possible (para)medical treatment options.
- ✓ Decide together on strategies to reduce symptom burden and if necessary, refer patients to a different expert (e.g. psychologist).
- ✓ Communicate how problems or doubts about the treatment can be discussed.
- ✓ Implement follow-up actions and evaluate whether PROMs results improve.
- ✓ Share PROMs follow-up actions with the team and general practitioner.

Made possible by:

This flyer has been developed as part of the PRO-GUIDE project.  
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# How to discuss PROMs in the consultation room?

## Recommendations for healthcare professionals in nephrology



Squarepig Illustrations, Petra Konijn

This flyer has been developed based on scientific research, experiences and advice from patients and healthcare professionals on using PROMs (abbreviation of: Patient-Reported Outcome Measures) in the consultation room.



## Why discuss PROMs?



**More complete overview:** PROMs results provide a more complete overview of how patients are really doing and of all the symptoms that patients experience.



**PROMs as tool:** Use PROMs results as a guide for what is important to the patient and to start a conversation about topics that often remain unaddressed (including sensitive topics).



**Personalize treatment:** Information and a conversation about PROMs results can assist in fine-tuning the treatment for each patient.



**Patient satisfaction:** Always discuss the PROMs results so it's clear that all topics are open to discussion. Patients also feel more acknowledged: *"What I feel matters!"* Patients do not expect a solution for every symptom, but they do want to discuss it. Sometimes acknowledging, understanding, and explaining is sufficient.

## Preparation for discussing PROMs



**Inform the patient:** Explain that PROMs results will be discussed, in what way, and why. Invite the patient 2-4 weeks in advance to complete the PROMs (inquire about preference for online/paper completion and support needs) and to prepare for the consultation (including thinking about discussion topics).



**Preparation for healthcare professionals:** Prepare for the conversation about the PROMs results. Think in advance about discussion topics, follow-up actions and treatment options.

**Important to note:** Always discuss PROMs results, even when no (new) topics emerge, sensitive topics emerge, the cause of a symptom is not medical, and/or no (medical) treatment is available.

## Discussing PROMs during the consultation

### Safe space and bond of trust:

- Discuss PROMs results in a setting that feels safe and private.
- The conversation is conducted by the healthcare professional who knows the patient well. A bond of trust is required for the patient to share personal concerns, experiences and needs.



### Prioritize and decide together:

- Indicate that you can guide the patient and structure the conversation. Take the initiative on sensitive topics.
- Acknowledge the 'complete picture': what is (not) going well.
- Together, prioritize the 3-4 most important topics to discuss during this consultation.
- Invite the patient to share and explain experiences and needs. Also, inquire about experienced symptom burden in relation to what is important in the patient's life.
- Check your interpretations and conclusions.
- Provide explanations for symptoms and clarify possible causes, consequences, and (para)medical treatment options (including pros and cons).
- Decide together how to reduce the symptom burden. If necessary, refer the patient to healthcare professionals with a different expertise (social worker, dietician, physical therapist, psychologist, etc.).
- Explain that and how problems with and doubts about the treatment can be discussed.



## PROMs follow-up actions and evaluations

**Follow-up actions:** Take follow-up actions, monitor symptoms over time, and evaluate whether PROMs results improve.



**Multidisciplinary process:** Incorporate PROMs follow-up actions into the multidisciplinary healthcare pathway, and share actions with the team and the general practitioner.

