

Care Navigation Scenarios

What would you do?





What are scenario cards?

Being a Care Navigator involves more than just knowing how the practice works; it's about having the knowledge of services a patient can access, having and using good communication skills, and ensuring a patient's journey through the healthcare system is as smooth and effective as possible. With that in mind, this selection of scenarios is designed to enhance your problem-solving skills, empathy, and communication abilities when dealing with such challenges.

How to use scenario cards

It's important to understand what your staff know about the services available to patients both inside and outside the practice. These scenario cards will help you make decisions around which services you can care navigate patients to. Scenario cards can be used when inducting new staff or they can allow you to check in with your experienced team members and clarify their current understanding of care navigation.

The scenario cards enable staff to explore realistic and relatable situations which they will find themselves dealing with daily in practice. Each scenario may have several different outcomes, and this may be an opportunity to encourage discussion with the extended practice team.



Scenario 1

Hana is a forty-six-year-old woman with three sons. On Saturday morning one of her sons is out playing with friends when he twists his ankle and falls. One of his friends, who was trying to get the ball off him could not stop in time and ended up accidentally standing on his foot. At the time they laughed it off, but the ache has not subsided, and the ankle is showing signs of swelling and reddening.

On Monday, Hana's son is woken up by the pain in his ankle. It is more painful when he walks on it. Hana is concerned that he has broken or fractured his ankle, and she takes him out of school to try and get an appointment with his GP. Hana tells the receptionist the symptoms and tells her they remind her of a time in her childhood when she jumped off a wall and landed on her ankle. In that instance, she said, there was a fracture. She wants her GP to refer her son for an X-ray and says he will need a prescription for pain relief if he's going to go back to school.



Scenario 2

Hector is a 40-year-old patient who is in good health and rarely visits the surgery. He calls to say that he is worried about some dry and itchy skin that has appeared behind his elbows and knees.

He wants a GP appointment to prescribe some cream to alleviate the problem and wants one after 4.30 any day as that is when he finishes work.



Scenario 3

Laura has been asthmatic since her school days and has had type two diabetes for sixteen years. She was first diagnosed at the age of thirty-one and was told she could control her diabetes with a mixture of diet changes and medication.

Three months ago, she had a new diabetic review that recommended a different course of medication. Around the same time, she started using a new inhaler to deal with her asthma. Today she is asking to see a GP, saying that she dislikes her new inhaler and is worried it is reacting badly with her new diabetic medication. She says she feels short of breath more often than she did before she began using this new inhaler. She requests a GP appointment to prescribe her a different inhaler.

Let's Discuss - Scenario 1

Hana's son should be navigated to urgent care treatment unit. Many units do offer x-ray facilities. Discuss what diagnostic facilities are available at the local treatment unit nearest to the practice. Is there an age limit to who can be seen or x-rayed? Pain relief can be bought over the counter from local pharmacies with the advice of the pharmacist. When Hana's son is seen at urgent care treatment unit he may be supplied with a prescription by the doctor or nurse who cares for him. Discuss if prescriptions can be supplied by staff at the treatment centre.



Let's Discuss - Scenario 2

Hector should be navigated to the local pharmacy. He could attend as a walk-in patient or be referred via GP CPCS. If Hector is at work the NHS Find a Pharmacy website can locate a pharmacy local to his place of work. The NHS symptom checker may provide some information and reassurance to Hector until he is able to visit the pharmacy.



Let's Discuss - Scenario 3

There are several options for Laura to be navigated to, depending on what internal services the practice may offer. These include a practice-based pharmacist, an asthma/respiratory nurse, a diabetes nurse, or a nurse practitioner. The pharmacist at the local pharmacy would also consult with Laura and offer a review of the new medication. Discuss which is the preferable route for Laura in your practice.

Scenario 4

Just over a year ago Jane had her second child, a girl called Mary. She is twenty-eight years old and is living with her husband Greg. Six months ago, she stopped breastfeeding, and she is concerned about a persistent itchy, irritated feeling around her nipple.

She thinks it might be the after-effects of breastfeeding, though she did not have this complaint when she had her first child four years ago. She has also recently noticed some unidentified discharge from the nipple. She thinks some topical cream might relieve the symptoms and is looking for an appointment with her GP to have this prescribed.



Scenario 5

Luke is nineteen and has not been to the doctors' since he was six years old, when he had tonsillitis. He recently started work at a large warehouse.

In his first month at work, lockdown began and there was a surge in the number of orders. He was keen to impress his foreman with the number of packages he moved, though some of his older co-workers warned him he was ignoring proper lifting and handling procedures. He did not think much of it until he woke up with a persistent pain in his lower back. He had felt discomfort while moving heavy boxes before, but the pain had usually passed once he put the object down. He would like an appointment with his GP to talk about his symptoms.



Scenario 6

Brian is a 30-year-old male patient who phones to say that they are worried as they seem to be passing urine a lot more, especially at night and that there seems to be a strange smell when he passes urine. He also tells you he is experiencing a burning sensation whilst urinating. He asks for a GP appointment to discuss his symptoms.

Let's Discuss - Scenario 4

Jane is sharing symptoms which may result in a two-week rule referral to a hospital. Discuss what pathway this would follow in your practice. Does it need a same day appointment, or the next available routine appointment, or a same day telephone triage appointment? Can Laura be triaged by a nurse practitioner? Or, if there are no available same day appointments, should Laura be navigated to an extended hours appointment? If Laura sees a GP, this is not a navigation, but if Laura attends an extended hours appointment or sees a nurse practitioner this is a navigation.



Let's Discuss - Scenario 5

Luke can be navigated to a First Contact Physiotherapist (FCP). If Luke thinks he needs to see a GP before this navigation, the care navigator should be prepared to 'sell' the service to Luke by explaining how a physio can help him. Discuss what services the FCP in your practice can offer – can they provide fit notes if required, are they able to prescribe medication if needed, and if not are they able to approach a prescriber in the practice without Luke needing another appointment? Are they able to offer joint injections or refer for scans if needed?



Let's Discuss - Scenario 6

Brian should be given access to a GP appointment. Urinary tract infections (UTI) in male patients are uncommon and need to be checked by a clinician. It may be useful to ask the patient to bring a urine sample when attending the appointment. If an ANP/NP appointment is available this would be classed as an internal navigation.

Note that uncomplicated UTIs in female patients will be seen and treated, if necessary, by the pharmacy under the Pharmacy First scheme.

Scenario 7

Lina is a 35-year-old patient who calls to say that she has had a sore throat for about 3 days now and it does not seem to be getting better.

She says that she needs antibiotics and needs a GP appointment to prescribe these.



Scenario 8

Trevor works from home and is often works on his computer. He is starting to notice symptoms of ill health that he thinks are connected to the increased time he spends on the computer. His eyes are dry and bloodshot.

He has a history of ocular degeneration in the family, and his father was registered as partially sighted when he was sixty. Trevor is worried that the same thing is happening to him. Ten years ago, he discussed these fears with his optician, who prescribed contact lenses, but he is worried these might be adding to the irritation and dryness in his eyes now. He is calling for an appointment with his GP to discuss these concerns.



Scenario 9

Caroline is a 38-year-old female patient who calls to say that she has had vaginal thrush in the past and she is experiencing the same type of symptoms as she had before. She saw the female GP the last couple of times and is wanting to book an appointment with her again today.



Let's Discuss - Scenario 7

Lina can be navigated to her local pharmacy as a walk-in patient or by GP CPCS. Pharmacy First will also help the patient as sore throat is on the list of ailments that will be reviewed under this scheme. Lina can be directed to the NHS A-Z symptom checker which may reassure her that pharmacy is able to diagnose and treat the symptoms she is describing.



Let's Discuss - Scenario 8

Trevor should be navigated to the local opticians who offer an eye care service if this service is offered in the area you work in. This is often known as MECS, PEARS or CUES. Reassure Trevor that the optician has all the relevant equipment in the practice to enable the optician to closely examine the eye and that the optician can refer into secondary care if this is necessary.



Let's Discuss - Scenario 9

Caroline can be navigated to local pharmacy as a walk-in patient. It would be helpful for the navigator to request a little more information as pharmacy will have restrictions on seeing patients with recurrent episodes of vaginal thrush depending on the patient's age and frequency of episodes.



Scenario 10

Wanda is a keen gardener who often helps out with flower arranging at her local church. She is trying to renovate her own garden, but recent bad weather has forced her to delay. Last week the weather was sunny, and she decided to start work in the garden again. When she went to bed after the first day working in the garden, she noticed several insect bites on her legs.

The next day was hotter and drier, and she found it hard to stay in the garden as her eyes kept watering. She has shown several hay fever symptoms since, including a runny nose and itchy eyes, and the insect bites have become uncomfortable as well. She has called the surgery to ask if she can make an appointment with her GP in the hope that she can be prescribed something for these conditions.



Let's Discuss - Scenario 10

Wanda has described symptoms which may suggest she is suffering from hay fever. Hayfever symptoms can be treated at the pharmacy and over the counter medication can relieve these symptoms.

The pharmacist will provide Wanda with advice on how to treat her symptoms, which may include a medicine or product. Medicines that can be purchased in a pharmacy to treat minor illnesses, are usually inexpensive and would not normally be prescribed by her GP. Wanda is free to choose if she would like to make a purchase or not. Wanda may choose to buy medication elsewhere after a consultation with the pharmacist. Wanda can attend the pharmacy as a walk-in patient or be referred from the practice using GP CPCS.

The insect bite can be reviewed by the pharmacist under the Pharmacy First scheme, as infected insect bites are one of the seven common ailments this scheme will offer treatment for if appropriate. Alternatively, the care navigator could request for Wanda to send in a photograph of the bite for the doctor to review.

If Wanda is given an appointment with the nurse practitioner this would be classed as a navigation, as Wanda did request a GP appointment when she called the practice. The NHS website has an A-Z symptom checker with pictures which Wanda could refer to. The link could be texted across to her.

Useful Links

NHS A – Z symptom checker

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/>



NHS Find a Pharmacy

<https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/pharmacy/find-a-pharmacy>

