

Training Healthcare Providers in Compassionate Cannabis Communication: An AI-Powered Chatbot Simulation

Check it out:
Watch a demo of a
full training session.



SCAN



Designed and Developed by Jackie Wigder

Client: Association of Cannabinoid Specialists (ACS)

OBJECTIVE

The Healthcare Provider Training (HPT) Chatbot is an AI-powered patient simulation that trains healthcare providers in compassionate communication during cannabis disclosure conversations.

1. Formulate non-stigmatizing, patient-centered responses to cannabis disclosure
2. Integrate real-time feedback by practicing alternative communication approaches
3. Reflect on personal communication patterns and identify behaviors to continue or change

RATIONALE

During onboarding, the chatbot grounds providers in the research that drives this training.

Healthcare Provider Training v4.0.6

Cannabis Disclosure Conversation Practice

UM School of Pharmacy - Instructional Design Capstone Project - Jackie Alyse Wigder

Here is what we know:

- Only 15% of cannabis discussions are initiated by providers (King et al., 2024)
- 28% of the time, cannabis use never comes up at all (King et al., 2024)
- 86% of medical cannabis patients substitute cannabis for other medications (Boehnke et al., 2021)
- 44% of providers remain completely unaware of this substitution (Boehnke et al., 2021)
- #1 predictor of patient non-disclosure: anticipated stigma (King et al., 2024)

When patients withhold this information, they manage potential drug interactions and treatment changes without clinical oversight.

The bottom line: Your response when a patient discloses shapes whether they continue to be honest with you (King et al., 2024).

AUDIENCE

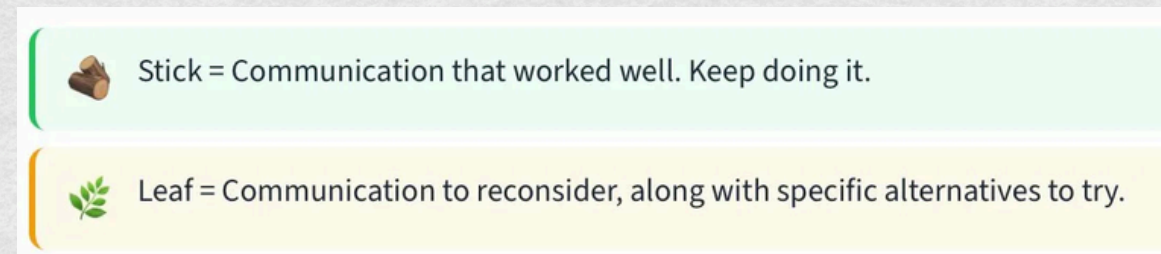
- Any healthcare provider: physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, pharmacists, therapists, medical students, and clinical staff
- Prerequisites: No prior cannabis science knowledge or Motivational Interviewing experience required
- Time: Approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete

DESCRIPTION OF TRAINING MATERIALS

The HPT Chatbot is a web-based, self-paced training tool built on the Anthropic Claude API.

The training moves through four phases:

1. **Onboarding:** Introduces the Stick and Leaf communication framework and seven communication principles



2. **Pre-Assessment:** Collects baseline data on provider confidence, experience, and goals
3. **Patient Simulation:** The provider responds to a simulated patient over seven exchanges, receiving the patient's reaction, targeted coaching, and the option to retry with a different approach. Coaching is grounded in Motivational Interviewing, trauma-informed care, and shame resilience theory.
4. **Reflection:** Guided reflection and a personalized summary connecting the provider's language choices to patient outcomes

EVALUATION PLAN

The simulation functions as an embedded assessment instrument:

- **Reaction:** Post-session survey captures provider experience of the training's relevance and usefulness
- **Learning:** A scoring system evaluates each provider response for language patterns mapped to seven evidence-based communication principles, identifying behaviors that build trust and behaviors that reduce it. Pre/post confidence comparisons and retry data provide additional data.
- **Behavior:** Future follow-up surveys will assess whether communication changes persist in clinical practice
- **Results:** The chatbot captures individual outcomes including pre/post confidence shifts, path history across all seven exchanges, and retry patterns. Broader organizational impact measurement is planned for future implementation.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Learner analysis revealed a significant neurodivergent representation among respondents, shifting the project's focus to address not just what providers say, but how they say it.



- Building with AI means designing for change, not a finished training tool. The technology evolves, and the instructional materials must evolve with it.