



TOOL 3.5: Definitions of Barriers and Actions

This tool provides you with definitions of barriers and actions as our program defines them, and examples to help you understand those definitions. When using this tool, please keep in mind the following:

- Programs may define barriers differently.
- Some barriers will be more common than others depending on your patient population's needs.
- When documenting barriers, it is important that everyone on the navigation team works with the same definition of a given barrier.

Barrier	Definition	Examples
Transportation	Difficulty getting from home to site of medical care (BMC or referrals to other facilities), or vice versa	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- no access to public transportation- trouble finding a ride from someone else- can't afford bus fare, gas, or cost of parking- patient is disabled and needs to use chair-car or ambulance- patient needs to use The Ride or Care Van to get to appointment- patient has appointment at outside facility which is not accessible by public transportation
Housing	Concerns about affordable housing interfere with patient's ability to receive healthcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- patient is homeless, lives in a shelter, or lives with a relative/friend- Patient Navigator cannot get in touch with patient due to frequent changes in address- patient uses alias address to obtain healthcare- patient must go to court for hearing on eviction
Language/Interpreter	Patient cannot communicate in English with healthcare personnel (if Patient Navigator speaks a non-English language w/ patient, select this barrier)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- patient cannot communicate with Patient Navigator over the phone without an interpreter- patient needs interpreter at medical appointment- patient relies on family member to serve as interpreter during appointment- patient does not understand literature or letters in English
Literacy	Difficulty understanding written communication from the healthcare setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- patient does not having a reading level adequate for understanding literature from MD- new patient has difficulty filling out medical history form at first visit
Childcare issues	Need for childcare interferes with patient's ability to receive medical services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- can't find or afford babysitter to look after child/grandchild/other relative- patient's child is sick on the day of appointment- patient brings children to appointment

Eldercare/ family care issues	Difficulty finding support for other family members when patient needs medical care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - patient is sole care-taker of parent/family member/spouse, and can't leave them alone to go to appointment - patient delays medical care because she is dealing with parent who has serious medical condition such as cancer or Alzheimer's
Distance	Distance from site of care interferes or delays with patient's medical care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - patient spends 6 months in Haiti - elderly patient spends part of year in Florida - patient attends school out-of-state and can only schedule appointments during vacation periods
Insurance difficulties	Insurance status or requirements of insurance carrier limit or delay healthcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - patient lacks full coverage for medical care - need to renew documents for Free Care or other insurance plan causes patient to delay care - medication is not covered through patient's insurance plan - insurance company denies prior authorization for procedure
Financial problems	Dealing with financial problems is interfering with receiving healthcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - patient cannot pay for rent, heat, food, etc, which interferes with arranging healthcare - patient gets eviction notice - patient cannot pay phone bill, so Patient Navigator is not able to contact patient - co-pays for MD appointment, other procedure, or medication are unaffordable
Work scheduling conflicts	Work demands make receiving healthcare difficult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - patient does not get sick time, so patient loses pay when she has medical appointment - patient is worried about losing job - patient needs a weekend or evening appt due to work schedule, which facility does not schedule
Communication concerns	Barriers to understanding the information given to them by medical personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - patient does not communicate well with MD - patient does not understand MD's explanations of test results or orders - patient did not understand instructions given by clinic staff or Patient Navigator about next appointment - patient confuses radiology department with clinic which interferes with patient's care - patient has MD appointment following test but patient is sent home without seeing MD for results
Fear	Fear about any aspect of medical care or patient's health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - patient is afraid of cancer diagnosis which delays care - patient declines to have biopsy or other procedure because she does not want to receive bad results - patient has had bad experience with MD or hospital in the past

Family illness/death	Family-related health issues interfere with patient's ability to receive medical care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - patient's child's illness prevents patient from keeping appointment - patient must sacrifice her appointment so that she can accompany a family member to his/her appointment - patient must delay care due to death in the family and the subsequent grieving period
Patient disability	Physical or mental disability interferes with patient's ability to receive healthcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - patient is blind or deaf - patient suffers from anxiety disorder, severe depression, or other mental disability which interferes with care - patient is mentally challenged - patient is in a wheel-chair - patient is known to have substance abuse problems or alcoholism
Out of town/country	Patient is out of the area when a follow-up appointment is scheduled or needs to be arranged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - patient no-shows for her follow-up appointment because she spends part of the year in another country - Patient Navigator is not able to get in touch with patient to schedule test because patient is on vacation
Unaware of appointment/Rx/Plan	Follow-up plan is unclear to patient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - new patient was not notified by referring provider of appointment in breast clinic, which delays her care - patient forgets about her follow-up appointment and must reschedule - patient is not aware that she must return for 6-month follow-up imaging
Attitude of HC system	Personal or cultural beliefs interfere with patient's ability to receive care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - patient had a bad experience in the past with a doctor or hospital - patient subscribes to a religion which does not endorse surgery or invasive treatment - patient has specific preferences for the characteristics of doctor
Couldn't get through on phone	Patient Navigator is unable to reach patient by phone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - patient's phone is temporarily disconnected or patient ran out of cell phone minutes due to costs - patient's number is no longer in service and Patient Navigator can't locate alternative number in patient's medical chart - Patient Navigator has left multiples messages on patient's voice-mail but patient has not responded
Other	Any other barrier not listed that interferes with patient's medical care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - medical provider cancels clinic and delays patient's care - patient is unable to wait for medical provider or imaging appointment - patient gets imaging but leaves hospital before following up with MD as scheduled

Action	Definition	Examples
Accompany patient	Patient Navigator accompanies patient to healthcare services or other services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Patient Navigator accompanies patient to radiology or surgical visit because patient is alone or fearful - Patient Navigator accompanies patient to managed care office - Patient Navigator accompanies patient outside of hospital to deal with legal matter
Arrangements	Patient Navigator makes arrangements to help patient arrive at appointment, to assist during the appointment, or to contribute to patient's well-being in other areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Patient Navigator arranges for patient's transportation (cab voucher, Care Van, etc.) - Patient Navigator arranges for interpreter/language line - Patient Navigator arranges for financial assistance - Patient Navigator enrolls patient in public assistance programs
Contact providers	Patient Navigator consults with medical provider in clinic, primary care practices, or community health centers regarding patient's care plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Patient Navigator contacts MD during breast clinic session regarding follow-up plan or patient status - Patient Navigator contacts referring provider's office after patient no-shows, or regarding any other aspect of care
Contact patient/family	Patient Navigator contacts patient or other family member regarding care plan or upcoming appointment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Patient Navigator interacts with patient in clinic - Patient Navigator speaks with patient's husband or children when making reminder call for upcoming appointment
Counseling/ Social support	Patient Navigator counsels or provides social/emotional support to patient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Patient Navigator helps patient who arrives to appointment worried - Patient Navigator accompanies patient who is scared to radiology, surgical appointment, or other facility in the hospital
Education	Patient Navigator educates patient or provides educational materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Patient Navigator explains imaging results to patient - Patient Navigator provides patient with literature or electronic resources regarding breast health or diagnosis
Records/ Record Keeping	Any Patient Navigator documentation in EMR (always check off)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Patient Navigator requests or provides patient's past medical records or outside imaging reports - Nurse appends an intake form or appointment letter for patient and notifies Patient Navigator
Referrals	Patient Navigator makes referrals for healthcare services or social service agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Patient Navigator refers patient to food pantry or patient financial services department - Patient Navigator provides information or contact numbers for outside resources such as homeless shelters or payment resources

Scheduling appointment	Patient Navigator schedules or reschedules appointment (do not check off if clinic staff schedule appointment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Patient Navigator schedules upcoming MD appointment or imaging appointment with patient in after her clinic visit - Patient Navigator helps to schedule appointment in genetics, plastics, or any other department - Patient Navigator calls radiology to schedule an appointment and then gives the appointment date to patient
Other	Patient Navigator completes any action that is not captured by the other categories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Patient Navigator continues to provide support to patient with cancer as she moves through treatment process - Patient Navigator makes herself available to listen to patient's questions and concerns before and after patient knows results