* **Red Flag:** The patient did not complete 31% of his ordered lab tests.
* **Probe:** The provider did not ask the patient why he had not completed so many lab tests.
* **Contextual Factor:** The patient mentioned on his own that he was struggling with memory issues and was having difficulty remembering tasks and obligations. (Domain: Skills, *Abilities*, and Knowledge)
* **No Contextual Plan of Care:** The provider did not comment, nor address the patient’s ability to remember upcoming appointments/labs (nor evaluate memory issues). The provider missed an opportunity to explore options to help the patient including seeing if he could put reminders on his phone or enlist the help of a family member to keep track of his upcoming appointments/labs.
* **Red Flag:** During an outpatient visit, the patient commented, “I still have problems understanding how to get my refills.”
* **Probe**: The provider asked, “For mail or at the window?”
* **Contextual Factor:** The patient responded that he didn’t understand either. (Domain: Skills, Abilities, and Knowledge)
* **No Contextual Plan of Care Made:** The provider didn’t say anything but ordered refills. The provider could have suggested the patient meet with a nurse of pharmacist to review the process, and/or sign up for My HealtheVet to manage his medications. It’s possible that this patient will continue to have issues refilling his medications.
* **Red Flag:** A patient with high blood pressure, when asked, stated that he was not checking his blood pressure at home as recommended because of the machine he owned.
* **Probe**: The provider asked the patient what kind of blood pressure machine he had at home.
* **Contextual Factor:** The patient responded that he had an old fashioned sphygmomanometer and had no idea how to use it. (Domain: Skills, Abilities, and Knowledge)
* **No Contextual Plan of Care Made:** The provider didn’t say anything and continued with the visit. The provider could have suggested the patient bring in his equipment to learn how to use it, or could have ordered an automated blood pressure machine for the patient.
* **Red Flag:** A patient with high blood pressure had a reading of 160/80.
* **Probe**: The provider asked if he had taken his BP medications.
* **Contextual Factor:** The patient responded that he had not been taking any medications because he did not have a functioning stove and knew that he was supposed to take them only on a full stomach.(Domain: Skills, Abilities, and Knowledge)
* **No Contextual Plan of Care Made:** The provider didn’t respond to the patient’s situation. This was a missed opportunity to inform the patient that he didn’t need a full meal to take his medications and that some medications, like his blood pressure pills, do not need to be taken with food. Also did not address signs that patient may not be eating adequately.
* **Red Flag:** The patient is not checking his blood pressure at home as had been discussed at a previous visit.
* **Probe**: The provider stated, “You’re not checking?”
* **Contextual Factor:** The patient responded that he didn’t have to use the home blood pressure monitor because “he could tell” when his blood pressure was high. (Domain: Skills, Abilities, and Knowledge)
* **No Contextual Plan of Care Made:** The provider didn’t follow up with any discussion about the patient’s understanding of high blood pressure and didn’t explain that his blood pressure could be elevated without having any physical symptoms.
* **Red Flag:** When it was recommended, the patient stated that he didn’t want physical therapy.
* **Probe:** The provider asked the patient why he didn’t want to start physical therapy.
* **Contextual Factor:** The patient responded that he didn’t understand how physical therapy could help with pain. (Skills, Abilities, and Knowledge Domain).
* **No Contextual Plan of Care:** The provider dropped the suggestion, and didn’t respond to the patient’s question with an explanation about the potential benefits of physical therapy for helping with certain kinds of pain.
* **Red Flag:** A patient declined the pneumonia vaccine.
* **Probe:** The provider asked the patient to explain why he was declining the vaccine.
* **Contextual Factor Discovered by Probing:** The patient responded that he had survived the winter so far (appointment was in February) and thought he’d be okay for the rest of the winter. (Domain: Skills, Abilities, and Knowledge)
* **No Contextual Plan of Care made:** The provider did not address the patient’s understanding of the long term benefits of the pneumonia vaccine (patient appears to be confusing it with the flu vaccine).
* **Red Flag:** A patient mentioned that he was not taking his prescribed medications.
* **Probe:** The resident physician asked the patient why (“Can you elaborate?”).
* **Contextual Factor Discovered by Probing:** The patient said he thought he was on too many meds and that “the side effects alone will kill me.” (Domain: Skills, Abilities, and Knowledge)
* **No Contextual Plan of Care made:** The physician did not respond. This was a missed an opportunity to review the rationale for each med, see if the patient was having any side effects, and discuss the risks and benefits of what he is taking.