

# BATHE Technique

*BATHE is an acronym for Background, Affect, Trouble, Handling, and Empathy and refers to specific questions or comments that physicians can incorporate into a standard interview with patients. It was developed as a rapid intervention for the assessment of psychosocial factors that may be contributing to physical complaints and was designed to fit within a 15-minute appointment.*

Table 1

## BATHE Questions

		<i>Example Question</i>	<i>Description</i>
B	Background	“What is going on in your life?”	This question helps elicit the context of the patient’s visit.
A	Affect	“How do you feel about that?” or “What is your mood?”	This question allows the patient to report on his/her current feeling state.
T	Trouble	“What about the situation troubles you the most?” or “Is there anything about that that troubles you?”	This question should be asked even when the patient’s affect is positive, as they may still be stressed about their current life circumstances.
H	Handling	“How are you handling that?” or “How could you handle that?”	This question is asked to evaluate what psychological stress the patient may be experiencing that may be contributing to their physical complaint or affective state.
E	Empathy	“That must be very difficult for you.”	Expressing empathy or sympathy conveys a sense of concern and of being understood, which affirms the patients and enhances positive feelings toward their health care provider.

Citation:

Leiblum, Sandra & Schnall, Eliezer & Seehuus, Martin & DeMaria, Anthony. (2008). To BATHE or not to BATHE: Patient satisfaction with visits to their family physician. *Family medicine*. 40. 407-11.