

# What to say during an initial evaluation

Introduce yourself & open the floor	“Hi, my name is ___. I’m a speech-language pathologist. I help people who have trouble with swallowing, communication, or cognition, like memory. I’ve read your chart, so I already have some ideas about how I might be able to help you. But first, I’d like to hear what’s important to you. What would you like to talk about?”
In case they deny any concerns	“I hear what you’re saying. I just want to make sure I don’t miss anything. When I read your chart, I saw that you were having trouble with ___. Do you notice having any trouble in that area now?”
If they still deny any concerns, but you suspect they are having difficulty.	“That’s great that you’re no longer having any trouble with ___. Is it okay if I ask your spouse to see if they’ve noticed anything?”  “It’s great that you’re no longer having trouble with ___. Is it okay if we do the evaluation so I can document that for your doctor?”
If they have concerns, but they’re too vague to be helpful	“What I’m hearing is that you’re having trouble with ___. Could you tell me more about that?”  “Can you describe for me what happens when you ___?”  “If we could fix that in therapy, how would you know ___ is better?”  “Do you notice any trouble with ___, ___, or ___?”
If it’s a cognitive-communication or language concern	Show them EST’s “54 daily activities checklist” and ask them to point out any skills they’re having trouble with.