

Using **internal summary** and **signposting** provides a method for the doctor to obtain order and appropriate control without sacrificing the benefits of openness.

**Summarising** allows you to:

- pull together and review what you have heard so far
- order the information into a coherent pattern
- realise what information you will need to obtain or clarify
- gain space to consider where the consultation should go next
- separate and consider both disease and illness

**Signposting** is the twin skill of summarising and allows you to introduce and draw attention to what you are about to say. It also signals a change in direction or a move from one part of the consultation to another. It announces to the patient what you are going to and invites the patient to think with you.

*Can I just check that I've understood you - let me know if I've missed something...*

*You mentioned .....Could I just start by asking a few more questions about....*

*Since we haven't met before, it will help me to learn something about your past medical history. Can we do that now?*

*I can see that you are in some discomfort but I need to ask you a few questions and make a brief examination to help sort out what exactly is going on.*