



*You probably remember how wants and needs are different, but here's a quick review. Any important skill is worth practicing!*

## Step 1

**Review some examples of wants and needs.**

One of the most important things you can do to communicate better is to distinguish **what you want vs. what you need** from the person you're talking to, and that's especially important when it comes to healthcare situations.

The examples on page 2 all deal with tricky moments for a person with a chronic illness.

Once you identify something as a want, you know that it's not a must-have. Then you can focus on healthy ways to get your needs met, and maybe even some of your wants!

## Step 2

**Apply the process to a healthcare situation you've experienced.**

Think of a tough healthcare situation you've faced. Decide what you **want (or wanted)** and **what you need (or needed)**. Write it in the space provided after the examples on page 2.

## Step 3

**Focus on finding solutions for getting what you need.**

Ask yourself, "Can I realistically get what I need from this person?"

- If YES, ask yourself, "**What do I have to do to ensure that I get what I need?**"
- If NO, ask yourself, "**Who can help me get what I need in this situation?**"

Write potential solutions in the space provided on page 3. If you need inspiration, see the examples of different ways to get your needs met.

## Step 4

Use this process anytime you feel your needs aren't being met, or if you're having difficulty telling the difference between a want and a need.

This exercise can help you to find clarity during tricky moments, so print several copies of the blank worksheet on page 4 to keep on hand for anytime you need them!

## ✓ Make the most of this exercise

- **There's no need to feel bad or guilty about having wants.** But if it looks like something you want isn't going to happen, it's probably better to focus on getting what you need.
- **Problem-solving is especially important in healthcare.** You won't find a rheumatologist on every street corner, and you can't always choose a medical office's or ER's staff. It may not be easy, or even the best idea, to step away from some healthcare relationships. To make these relationships work, you need strong problem-solving skills.
- **Problem-solving skills keep you in control.** There may be many times that you can't change a situation, but you can change the way you think about it. You're in control!

*It's always worth remembering that you choose how you think, respond, and feel.*



## Examples: Wants vs. Needs

*These examples illustrate the difference between wants and needs in healthcare situations, including the emotions a person might feel in this type of situation.*

### Situation 1

**Person:** My husband

**Situation:** When I took him as my appointment buddy, he talked to the doctor so much that he kind of took over.

**What I want:** I want him to be able to "read" me so he'll know when to step in and when to back off.

**What I need:** I need him to be helpful at the next appointment, but not take over.

### Situation 2

**Person:** My doctor

**Situation:** My doctor looks at the computer so much during our appointments that I'm not sure she's listening to me.

**What I want:** I want her undivided attention.

**What I need:** I need her to listen carefully and let me know that she understands what I'm telling her.

### Situation 3

**Person:** Checkout staff at my rheumatologist's office

**Situation:** When I tried to make my next appointment, I was flustered because I couldn't find my calendar. The staff seemed annoyed and impatient.

**What I want:** I want my doctor's staff to understand how hard it is to have lupus and remember all I need to keep track of my healthcare.

**What I need:** I need the staff to be respectful and accurate.

*Now it's your turn. Think about a situation you've recently faced and write about it below.*

### My Situation

**Person:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Situation:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**What I want:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**What I need:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## Examples: Finding Solutions

*Once you've figured out the difference between your wants and needs in a given situation, then you can start thinking about realistic solutions!*

Start by asking yourself:

**Can I realistically get what I need from this person?**

- If the answer is YES, ask yourself: **What do I have to do to ensure that I get what I need?**
- If the answer is NO, ask yourself: **Who can help me get what I need in this situation?**

*To help you think it through, here are some examples of potential solutions using two scenarios from page 2.*

### Situation 1

**Person:** My husband

**Situation:** When I took him as my appointment buddy, he talked to the doctor so much that he kind of took over.

**What I want:** I want him to be able to "read" me so he'll know when to step in and when to back off.

**What I need:** I need him to be helpful at the next appointment, but not take over.

**Solution A:** Before the next appointment, describe exactly what I need from him during my doctor's visit.

**Solution B:** Have my husband in the room only for the part of the visit I need help with (such as writing down my doctor's instructions).

**Solution C:** Ask my sister to be my appointment buddy next time.

### Situation 2

**Person:** My doctor

**Situation:** My doctor looks at the computer so much during our appointments that I'm not sure she's listening to me.

**What I want:** I want her undivided attention.

**What I need:** I need her to listen carefully and let me know that she understands what I'm telling her.

**Solution A:** Try to explain that I'm not sure she is listening when she works on the computer.

**Solution B:** Ask friends how they have handled a similar problem.

**Solution C:** Say, "I'll wait until you're done typing," and begin speaking again once she has finished.

*Now you try it! Start with the question at the top of this page, and brainstorm some solutions for the situation you started writing about on page 2.*

### My Situation

**Person:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Situation:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What I want:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What I need:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Solution 1:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Solution 2:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Solution 3:** \_\_\_\_\_



## Situation Worksheet: Wants and Needs

Go through the steps on this worksheet when you need help telling the difference between wants and needs, so that you can figure out how to get your needs met.

Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Situation: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What I want: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What I need: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Can I realistically get what I need from this person?

☐ YES

☐ NO

*If you answered YES, brainstorm solutions by asking yourself, "What do I need to do to ensure that my needs are met?"*

*If you answered NO, brainstorm solutions by asking yourself, "Who can help me get what I need?"*

Solution 1: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Solution 2: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Solution 3: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### → Ready for more?

Go to [usinlupus.com/SolCommunicate](https://usinlupus.com/SolCommunicate) to download the next activity: "Communicating Your Needs Clearly."

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