

Pre-Reading Discussion: Does your health professional ask you to fill out forms? What kind of medical information is requested on the forms? How have you dealt with that?

Directions: This passage is about a warehouse worker named Mike who has a negative experience in a doctor's office. Later, he gets some advice from a friend. Read it and see if you agree with his friend's advice.

Mike and Paul are good friends. They work together. They work in an auto parts warehouse, loading and unloading boxes of car parts.

Mike was having a bad day. His mind was not on the job. He was making a lot of mistakes. He seemed upset about something.

At lunch, Paul pulled Mike aside. "Hey man. What's up? You seem like you're ticked off about something," said Paul.

Mike liked Paul. He trusted him. "Yeah," he said, "I guess you're right. I am upset."

"What is it?" asked Paul.

"You know how I've been complaining about getting a ringing in my ears?" asked Mike.

"Yes," said Paul. "I remember I told you to go to a doctor to get it checked out."

“Well, I took your advice. I went to see a doctor yesterday after work,” said Mike.

“How did it go?” asked Paul.

“I never got to see him,” said Mike.

“Why not? What happened?” asked Paul.

Mike looked at the ground. “When I got to his office they handed me all this paperwork to fill out. You know I have a hard time with reading and spelling. There were so many forms. I only had a few minutes to fill them all in. I couldn’t do it. I started to sweat. I didn’t know what to do.”

“So what happened?” asked Paul.

“I just snapped. I jumped up from the chair. I told the lady at the desk I forgot that I needed to pick up my kids. Then I just ran right out of there,” said Mike.

“That’s too bad,” said Paul. He thought for a while. Then he asked, “Did you take the forms with you when you ran out?”

“Yeah. They’re in my truck,” said Mike.

“I’ll tell you what. After work let’s take a look at those forms,” said Paul. “I’ll help you fill them out. You can call the doctor back and get a new appointment.”

“Are you sure? That would be great!” said Mike.

Then Paul said, “Most doctors’ offices ask for the same kind of information. They ask about what insurance you have, and about you and your family’s medical history. Before you give the papers to the doctor, make a photocopy to keep. Then it will be easier the next time you have to go to a new doctor’s office.”

“Good idea,” said Mike.

Paul was still thinking. Then he said, “And maybe next time you can ask the doctor’s office to mail you the forms before your visit. Then you’ll have more time to study them. You won’t feel so put on the spot.”

“Yeah, but what if they can’t, or what if it’s an emergency or something?” asked Mike.

“Well, you could say: *I have dyslexia, so reading and filling out medical forms is hard for me. Is there anyone who could help me?*’ If you give them a chance they probably will be glad to help you.”

“Thanks, Paul,” said Mike. “You’re right. I shouldn’t be so embarrassed. Next time I’ll try that.”

After work they looked at the forms. When Mike took his time he could figure out a lot of the words. The more he learned what to expect, the more confident he felt. Next time he would not need to panic.

HEALTH UNIT: SECTION 10
Filling Out Medical and Family History Forms

BEGINNER READING PASSAGE

Questions for Discussion:

Can you relate to Mike's experience?

What advice did Paul give to Mike? Do you agree with his advice?

What have you done in the past when you had to read and fill out a lot of forms?