



Physician Patient Relationship Tool
Caring Communication Self-Check for Physicians

In addition to expecting competence and quality care, patients and families want a respectful and caring physician patient relationship. They want to trust that the physician cares about them as people. This Self-Check identifies a variety of behaviors that communicate empathy and caring to patients and families. See how you fare.....

	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Always
Do I acknowledge the feelings of my patients and families? Do I				
Listen carefully, paying attention to nonverbal signals and try to read what the person seems to be feeling <i>behind</i> their words?				
Reflect their feeling back to them, in such a way that the person has room to correct me if I didn't get it exactly right?				
Give a clear nonverbal message of empathy and acceptance?				
Check back with the person to see if I've read their feeling correctly?				
Stay open and non-defensive even if the person is angry or difficult?				
Do I show my caring nonverbally with my patients and families? Do I				
Match my nonverbal behavior to my caring words				
Match my nonverbal behavior to the person I'm with				
Meet anger with a posture of concern				
Meet urgency with a posture of urgency				
Meet calm with a posture of calm				
Meet pain with a posture of empathy				
Consciously adjust my eyes, expression and posture so that these match the other person's				
Do I express my positive intent with my patients and families? Do I				
Get clear on why what I am about to do is in the person's best interest				
Explain what I am going to do and then tell the person how it is for their sake				
Jot down new situations for which I want to customize words for expressing positive intent and then do so				

Do I respond to complaints or frustrations with a blameless apology? Do I	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Always
Say "I'm sorry" in a genuine way				
Say "I'm sorry" even if whatever happened was not my fault				
Say "I'm sorry" without sounding defensive				
Say "I'm sorry" without offering excuses				
Say "I'm sorry" without proceeding to place blame on others				
Communicate my caring nonverbally too, so that my apology feels sincere				
Speak in the first person, saying "I'm sorry", not "We're sorry"				
Make clear the experience about which I'm sorry				
Offer the blameless apology right away, even before finding out the details of the situation or exploring remedies				
In my communication with my patients, do I				
Express appreciation to them for tolerating inconvenience				
Give them compliments to ease their anxiety				
Say thanks often				
Make eye contact and sound genuine when I'm thanking or appreciating them				

What are my strengths in communicating caring to my patients and families?

What can I work on in order to be more effective in communicating my caring and respect to my patients and families?