

Physician Patient Relationship Tool  
**Keys to A Quality Physician Patient Relationship**



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- **Presence.** Tune out distractions and make your patient your sole focus.
- **Respect.** See patients and their companions as experts in the experience of their illness and their needs.
- **Partnership.** Encourage patients and their companions to ask questions and initiate discussions about what they know or believe about health and disease and to share in decision-making.
- **Caring.** Show you care about the patient not just as a body, but as a *person*. Communicate interest in what patients and their families present as important to them.
- **Body Language.** Move to your patient's level, turning to face them directly. Lean forward slightly to demonstrate your presence. Give quality eye contact.
- **Inquiry.** Ask open-ended questions to uncover your patient's real needs.
- **Excellent communication.** Listen patiently without interrupting. Acknowledge the patient's/companion's emotions. To make sure you understand, paraphrase the key thoughts and ask the patient/companion whether you've captured his or her concerns. Explain clearly and check for understanding in a way that helps them feel comfortable to say they don't understand.
- **Information.** Information is power. Share it with your patients.
- **Confidentiality and Privacy.** Watch what you say and where you say it. Knock before entering. Close curtains and doors. Cover the patient. Use private space when discussing patient information with a patient, family member or colleague.
- **Cultural Sensitivity.** Make it your business to understand more about how your patient's culture shapes their relationship to illness, health, and healing.
- **Safety and Trust.** Build these over time by doing all of the above.