**Improve Doctor-Patient Communication**

*Source: The California Quality Collaborative*

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| Change | Action | Language |
| 1. Negotiate an agenda with the patient at the start of the visitMCj04315850000[1] **3-4** | * Elicit patient’s key concerns by asking them to prioritize their goals for the visit on a written form
* Remember that most patient visits address 3-4 problems
* Prioritize and reach consensus
 | * “What is it that you are hoping we accomplish today?”
* “Anything else you are wondering about?”
* “I want to make certain I’ve got everything. You say you are concerned about ………… Have I got it all?”
* “O.K. Mrs. Jones, we will address ……..And I’d like to talk about…., even though that doesn’t seem to be your top concern today. Will you be O.K. with that?”
* “It may be necessary to schedule another visit to address your other complaints if we run out of time today. Are you O.K. with that?”
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| 2. Make a personal connection through eye contact and empathetic statements.  | * Make eye contact and shake hands as you enter the room
* Acknowledge the reason for the visit and make a brief, personal connection before beginning the visit
* Use open ended questions and avoid “who, what, why where” questions
* Ask about self-diagnosis
* Demonstrate appreciation of patient concerns through empathetic statements
 | * “At your last visit you mentioned your family got a new puppy. How is that going?”
* “I’m curious about…..” or “Tell me more about ….”
* “So, what I hear you saying is….”
* “I’ve arrived at one explanation of what the difficulty is (provide your explanation.) How does that fit in with what you have been thinking?”
* “It wounds like making the diet changes we discussed has been pretty frustrating.”
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| 3. Enlist the patient in creating an action plan and summarize agreed-upon next steps.MCj02510620000[1] | * Notify the patient when you are coming to the end of the meeting
* Share decision making on the goals
* Summarize and review diagnosis, treatment and patient self-care
* Discuss and clarify any

 follow-up with patient | * “Our time is almost up, is there anything else you have questions about?”
* “These are the steps we discussed…. Do you have any questions?”
* “Good-bye. I hope you feel better soon.”
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