

Supportive Communication with Patients

Quick Reference for Practitioners

ASK: The Right Questions

Use open-ended, non-judgmental language to build trust.

✗ Instead of

Why didn't you take your medicine?
Why do you feel like this?
Why are you crying?

✓ Ask this

What made it hard to take your medicine?
What's been going on lately?
What's making you feel upset today?



Why it works

- Opens up conversation without blame
- Encourages reflection and sharing
- Shows curiosity and care

AVOID: Pitfalls in Communication

✗ Don't

Interrupt or rush the patient
Use medical jargon
Dismiss feelings ('You're fine')
Ask too many closed questions

✓ Do Instead

Give space and silence for them to speak
Use simple, clear language
Validate feelings ('It makes sense to feel that way')
Ask one open question at a time



LISTEN: With Your Full Presence

Active Listening Tips:

- Make eye contact and nod occasionally
- Use verbal encouragement: “Go on...” “I hear you...”
- Reflect feelings: “It sounds like you feel ___”
- Avoid interrupting—let them finish
- Clarify with:
“Can you help me understand that better?”



SUPPORT:

Practical Ways to Show You Care

Step

What to Say or Do

1. Acknowledge

“That must be really tough.”

2. Normalize

“Many people in your situation feel this way.”

3. Explore

“What would help you feel a bit better today?”

4. Empower

“Would it help to talk to someone? I can help with that.”

“Listening is often the most powerful medicine we can offer.”



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