

SUMMARY OF THE FIVE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES AND SAMPLE PHRASES

1. Perspective-taking	
Imagine yourself as the patient and look at the situation through their eyes and their unique background.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I can only begin to understand what you’re going through. Please tell me more.” • “What’s your take on the situation?” • “I think I get what you’re saying.” [Repeat it back.] “What am I missing?”
2. Emotional attunement	
Be aware of and responsive to the patient’s emotions, which can clarify aspects of the patient’s experience that may be relevant to the diagnosis or treatment plan. Be an ally to the patient as they deal with their emotions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I appreciate you sharing your feelings with me; it helps me understand your perspective better.” • “Goodness, you must be in a great deal of pain.” • “Wow. This is such a difficult situation. How are you feeling?” • “I am so sorry you’re dealing with this. I will be with you through this process.”
3. Patient activation	
Encourage the patient to take a more active role in their health care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I’m here to provide the tools and knowledge you need to feel empowered in your health decisions. What would make you feel more confident in your ability to execute the plan we developed today?” • “What have you learned from past experiences that could help you moving forward?” • “What challenges do you foresee in making these changes, and how can I support you?” • “Can you use the patient portal to message me or the care team when you have concerns?” • “It’s great that you’re taking initiative. Let’s explore how to make that easier for you.”
4. Shared decision-making	
Collaborate with the patient to build the best treatment plan for them, integrating your medical knowledge with the patient’s context and preferences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I want to make sure you feel confident about this decision.” • “What would you like to discuss first?” • “It sounds like you would prefer to try medication for a while before considering surgery. Do I have that right?” • “I appreciate your input; it helps us create a treatment plan that aligns with your goals.” • “What is most important to you when considering your treatment plan?” • “Let’s weigh the pros and cons together to find the approach that feels right for you.”
5. Teach-back	
After explaining a concept to a patient (e.g., the risks of a medication), ask them to repeat back in their own words what you said, and then address any misunderstandings or gaps in knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Can you review your medications with me and why you should take them?” • “What are the key points you’ll remember from our conversation today?” • “I want to make sure we’re on the same page, so can you share what you understood?” • “Can you share with me your plan until your next clinic visit?” • “What did we just review about your current treatment plan?”



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