AGENDA-SETTING ALGORITHM

Build rapport: Use the patient’s name; greet all persons in the room; use a short, nonmedical social interaction; smile; make eye contact; sit down.

Transition to agenda setting: “I understand you are here for ____________, but before we get into that, is there something else you would like to discuss today?”

NO

Ask about refills and forms, and add your own agenda items:
Consider health maintenance issues and lab results.

Are there too many items for the time available?

NO

YES

Prioritize problems and negotiate the agenda: Ask the patient which problem he or she wants to start with today.

Explore the problem with an open-ended statement: “So, tell me about ______________.”

YES

Complete the agenda: Ask “Is there something else?” until the patient comes up with no new items.

NO

YES

Ask the patient which problem he or she wants to start with today.