Empathic Communication

• Heart-Head-Heart model
• Mindful practice – be present
• Remember behaviors that inspire team effectiveness, and those that interfere with morale
  – Acknowledge and appreciate the people around you!
  – Be open to other ideas, perspectives
• Effective openings and closings (6 seconds to make impression)
  – Introduce yourself by name and role
  – Ensure understanding and closure
• Build partnerships
  – Share control
  – What are the patient’s/family’s views, theories? (Kleinman’s 8 Questions)
  – Partnership language “with you / for you / together”
• Provide effective explanations
  – Ask-Tell-Ask
  – Teach back
• Hard conversations
  – Start with positive intent (or neutrality)
  – Know your main message

Source: The Language of Caring for Physicians program
Prepare with Intention
• Familiarize yourself with the patient.
• Create a ritual to focus your attention before a visit (i.e. deep breath, knock; wash or sanitize hands; etc.)

Listen intently and completely
• Sit down, lean forward, and position yourself to listen.
• Don’t interrupt. Your patient/family is your most valuable source of information.

Agree on what matters most
• Find out what your patient/family care about and incorporate these priorities into the visit agenda.

Connect with the patient’s story
• Consider the circumstances that influence your patient’s health.
• Acknowledge your patient’s/family’s efforts, celebrate successes.

Explore emotional cues
• Tune in. Acknowledge patient’s emotions, reassure. Promotes trust and partnership.

Recommended Clinician Practices to Foster Connection with Patients

Book resources page: