

Communication Checklist

Client relationships are the most important factor in building trust. Trust is built on transparency, openness and communication. Studies show that clients often feel uncomfortable visiting a health care professional, do not get clear or consistent information, and are unclear about why and what procedures they must endure.

Use this short checklist to assess your communication skills with clients.

1. Do you take the time to explain the agenda for each client's visit?
2. Do you feel rushed within each appointment?
3. Do you explain each procedure to the client carefully and ensure you are understood?
4. Do you get informed consent before doing any work on the client?
5. Do you obtain consent prior to touching the client?
6. Do you ask the client if he/she has any questions or concerns?
7. Do you avoid inappropriate comments, remarks or jokes?
8. Do you treat each client as an individual?
9. Do you speak directly to the client, in a relaxed, non-judgmental and supportive manner?
10. Do you carefully observe the client's expressions and non-verbal language to ensure understanding and to detect any discomfort or pain?
11. In your communications with clients, do you adjust your language to deal with children, seniors and individuals from other cultural backgrounds?
12. Are you mindful of, and adjust to, hearing difficulties, language barriers, cultural and religious values?
13. Do you apologize quickly and sincerely to the client when appropriate?
14. Is your language and approach sensitive to the client's feelings?
15. Is your communication with clients non-judgmental and non-threatening?
16. Do you talk less and listen more, allowing your clients to respond at their own pace?
17. Are you sensitive to any inconsistencies and discrepancies in the information your clients provide you?
18. At the end of the appointment, do you explain to each client anything they must do and discuss plans for their next appointment?
19. Do you provide clients with information that they can take home with them?
20. Do you enter into the client's chart / record, any significant information about the client that will facilitate better communication in subsequent visits?