## Partner with patients

### Collaborative communication strategies

How clinicians communicate with patients can influence treatment adherence. Below are some strategies you can implement immediately to help you communicate more effectively.

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<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Example</th>
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| Begin with open-ended questions about adherence, including recent medication use | **AVOID:** “Are you taking your medicines?”  
**TRY:** “How are your medications working for you?”  |
| Address “red flags” (e.g., missed appointments, prescription refills, requested labs, and lack of therapeutic response to medication change) | **AVOID:** “Why did you miss your appointment?”  
**TRY:** “I noticed you missed your clinic visit two months ago. Is there something we can do to help you get your follow-up care?”  |
| Explore reasons for possible non-adherence                               | **AVOID:** “Let me prescribe a different pill that might work better.”  
**TRY:** “What do you think would make it easier?”  |
| Elicit patient views on options and priorities to customize a care plan for each patient | **AVOID:** “Have you considered using a pillbox?”  
**TRY:** “What do you think would work for you?” or “What has worked for you in the past?”  |
| Remain non-judgmental at all times                                        | **AVOID:** Educational statements like “It’s really important to take your pill if you want to control your blood pressure.”  
**TRY:** Supportive statements like “Let’s think about this problem together; maybe we can come up with something that will work for you.”  |
| Use teach-back to ensure understanding of the care plan                   | **AVOID:** Close-ended questions like “Does this make sense to you?”  
**TRY:** “What is your understanding of what we’ve discussed today?”  |
| Use positive reinforcement to encourage healthy ideas or behaviors        | **AVOID:** “You haven’t been eating healthy or losing weight, only walking. You are not helping lower your blood pressure like we discussed.”  
**TRY:** “It’s good that you’ve been walking. Let’s talk about other things you can do to control your blood pressure.”  |
| Use ask-provide-ask structure to …                                       | **AVOID:** Statements that give advice without first asking what the patient already knows or thinks.  
**TRY:** “What do you know about exercising to lower blood pressure?” Patient responds: “I know I should be exercising three days a week.” You follow with: “That’s right, 30 minutes, three days a week is ideal. You can break each of those 30-minute sessions into three, 10-minute sessions. Does that sound reasonable?” |

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