

Guiding principles for provider-patient interactions

How can we ensure that the patient is an active partner in the provider-patient interaction? It is important that the patient's opinions, attitudes, and preferences be solicited and taken seriously even if the provider does not agree with them.

The following 6 principles promote patients' active involvement in their health and address the challenges of changing patient behavior.

- 1) Physicians should acknowledge that patients may be actively involved in health maintenance long before they seek medical care.
- 2) Patients should be empowered to be active participants in their medical care.
- 3) Providers should critically evaluate their own assumptions and underlying values about what constitutes a "good" patient and consider how these assumptions and values affect their communication strategies.
- 4) The patient's behavior change in the medical interaction should result from a process of negotiation between provider and patient.
- 5) The medical system should focus on community empowerment in addition to individual empowerment.
- 6) Accessible and understandable outcome data will empower the community to be active participants in the elimination of health disparities.

The above principles are an excerpt from:

Thiel de Bocanegra, H., & Gany, F. (2004). Good provider, good patient: changing behaviors to eliminate disparities in healthcare. *Am J Manag Care*, 10, SP20-8.

