

COVID-19 COMMUNICATION

Quick Tips to Connect



This is a challenging time for healthcare, and for communicating in healthcare encounters. We are most effective when we are mindful of not only what we say, but how we say it. We offer the following quick tips, reflective of ACH's broader training materials.

These skills help build trust and increase resilience.

Note: In this era of rapidly evolving practice as well as wide regional variations due to incidence and resources, individual recommendations may or may not resonate with local practices. Feel free to contact ACH with suggestions.

The Academy of Communication in Healthcare

TIP	THINK	DO	EXAMPLE
Be Present.	How am I feeling? Do I know whom I am meeting?	Make introductions. Explain role(s)	<i>"Hi. I'm the doctor taking care of you right now . . ."</i>
Identify patient's needs.	Do I know what they expect? What assumptions am I making?	Ask open-ended question(s).	<i>"Tell me your main concern."</i>
Listen.	What are they saying (content)? What are they feeling? (emotion)?	Listen for both content and emotion (even if not expressed). Resist interrupting.	<i>(Remain quiet)</i>
Respond. Provide empathy.	What did I hear, both content and emotion?	Name what you heard. Validate emotion.	<i>"It sounds like you're having trouble breathing and you're worried you might have the virus. It's normal to feel worried, especially during times like these."</i>
Share information.	How can I be clear and concise? How can I check understanding?	Tell information in small bites. Ask/answer additional questions.	<i>"I'm hearing you want a test. I wish we had tests for everyone. I have to follow rules that say not to test you. I know that's disappointing. The best option for now is for us to keep in touch with you. What's your phone number, so we can check with you in 2 days?"</i>

» Telemedicine COVID-19 Communication Guide: <http://www.achonline.org/COVID-19/Telemedicine>

» Sample Statements ART (Ask-Respond-Tell): <http://www.achonline.org/COVID-19/ART>