

CHECKLIST

Patient Comprehension Strategies



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Taking steps to ensure patient understanding and awareness is critical to your practice's communication strategies. This checklist can help you identify patient comprehension strategies already at work in your practice and target areas for improvement.

	Yes	No
Verbal and written health information and instructions are provided in lay language, and medical terms are explained. (For example, "shortness of breath" is used instead of "dyspnea," or "tooth decay" instead of "caries.")	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Patient forms and educational materials adhere to the principles of plain language (see box on previous page).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The quantity of information provided is reflective of "need to know," essential facts. Information does not include extraneous details that could distract the reader and potentially inhibit understanding. When possible, and with the patient's permission, family members and significant others are included in discussions about the patient's care.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The patient's overall capacity to understand, language barriers, cultural beliefs, and disabilities are considered as part of communication strategies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Access to language services, interpreters, and assistive technology is available to meet patients' diverse needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Instructions for follow-up care are provided verbally and reinforced in writing. Written versions are updated as changes occur.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The informed consent process is tailored to the specific patient and the complexity of the proposed intervention.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The practice's philosophy on informed consent reinforces that, for the patient to be truly "informed," he or she must understand the information that the health-care provider has disclosed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
"Teach-back" or "repeat-back" techniques are used to gauge patient understanding and reduce the risk of miscommunication.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Questions are encouraged, and time for questions and review of materials is allotted during patient appointments.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

This document should not be construed as medical or legal advice. Because the facts applicable to your situation may vary, or the laws applicable in your jurisdiction may differ, please contact your attorney or other professional advisors if you have any questions related to your legal or medical obligations or rights, state or federal laws, contract interpretation, or other legal questions.

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