

THE FOUR HABITS MODEL

HABIT	SKILLS	TECHNIQUES AND EXAMPLES	BENEFITS
INVEST IN THE BEGINNING	Create rapport quickly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce self to everyone in the room. • Refer to the patient by last name and title (e.g., Mr. or Ms.) until a relationship has been established. • Acknowledge wait. • Make a social comment or ask a non-medical question to put the patient at ease. • Convey familiarity by commenting on prior visit or problem. • Consider the patient's cultural background and use appropriate gestures, eye contact, and body language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes a welcoming atmosphere • Allows faster access to real reason for visit • Increases diagnostic accuracy • Requires less work • Minimizes "Oh by the way..." at the end of the visit • Facilitates negotiating an agenda • Decreases potential for conflict
	Elicit the patient's concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start with open-ended questions: "What would you like help with today?" "I understand that you're here for... Could you tell me more about that?" • Speak directly with the patient when using an interpreter. 	
	Plan the visit with the patient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeat concerns back to check understanding. • Let the patient know what to expect: "How about if we start with talking more about __, then I'll do an exam, and then we'll go over possible ways to treat this? Sound OK?" • Prioritize when necessary: "Let's make sure we talk about __ and __. It sounds like you also want to make sure we cover __. If we can't get to the other concerns, let's..." 	
ELICIT THE PATIENT'S PERSPECTIVE	Ask for the patient's ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the patient's point of view: "What do you think might be causing your symptoms?" "What concerns you most about this problem?" "What have you done to treat your illness so far?" • Ask about ideas from loved ones or from community. • Express respect towards alternative healing practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respects diversity • Allows the patient to provide important diagnostic clues • Uncovers hidden concerns • Reveals use of alternative treatments or requests for tests • Improves diagnosis of depression and anxiety
	Elicit specific requests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the patient's goal in seeking care: "How were you hoping I could help?" 	
	Explore the impact on the patient's life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check context: "How have your symptoms affected your daily activities/work/family?" 	
DEMONSTRATE EMPATHY	Be open to the patient's emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond in a culturally appropriate manner to changes in body language and voice tone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adds depth and meaning to the visit • Builds trust, leading to better diagnostic information, adherence, and outcomes • Makes limit-setting or saying "no" easier
	Make an empathic statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for opportunities to use brief empathic comments: "You seem really worried." • Compliment the patient on efforts to address problem. 	
	Convey empathy nonverbally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a pause, touch, or facial expression. 	
INVEST IN THE END	Deliver diagnostic information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frame the diagnosis in terms of the patient's original concerns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases potential for collaboration • Influences health outcomes • Improves adherence • Reduces return calls and visits • Encourages self-care • Enhances confidence and trust
	Provide education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain rationale for tests and treatments in plain language. • Review possible side effects and expected course of recovery. • Discuss options that are consistent with the patient's lifestyle, cultural values, and beliefs. • Provide written materials in the patient's preferred language when possible. 	
	Involve the patient in making decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss treatment goals to ensure mutual understanding and agreement. • Assess the patient's ability and motivation to carry out plan. • Explore barriers: "What do you think would help overcome any problems you might have with the treatment plan?" 	
	Complete the visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarize visit and review next steps. • Verify comprehension by asking the patient to repeat instructions. • Ask: "What questions do you have about what we discussed today?" • Give the patient a written summary of the visit, including relevant websites. • Close the visit in a positive way: "It's been nice seeing you. Thanks for coming in." 	