



# IMPROVING PATIENT ENGAGEMENT IN BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE

## Why is patient engagement important in behavioral healthcare?

- ✓ **Engaging the patient and caregiver** is important to improve health outcomes and support individual treatment plans.
- ✓ **Individuals’ desire to be engaged in decisions** regarding their healthcare.
- ✓ **Those engaged as active decision-makers** in their healthcare tend to be healthier, and experience improved outcomes.
- ✓ **Engagement increases health literacy**, adherence to treatment, functional status, and faster recovery.
- ✓ **Reduces the risk for rehospitalization**, medical errors, and suffering health consequences from poor communication among providers.

## What can you do to help increase patient engagement?

One way to do this is to follow the RESPECT Model.

### 1 Rapport

- Understand how respect is shown through verbal and nonverbal communication within given cultural groups.
- Attempt to connect on a social level.
- Validate the patient and family’s point of view.
- Suspend judgement and avoid making assumptions.

### 2 Empathy

- Express verbally and nonverbally, the significance of each patient’s concerns so that he or she feels understood.
- Focus on patient goals.
- Seek out and understand the patient’s rationale for behaviors and illness.
- Acknowledge the patient's feelings.



*The RESPECT Model stands for:*

- R** – Rapport
- E** – Empathy
- S** – Support
- P** – Partnership
- E** – Explanations
- C** – Cultural Competence
- T** – Trust

(continued)

### 3 Support

- Recognize how class, race, ethnicity, gender, education, socioeconomic status, sexual and gender orientation, immigrant status, community, family, gender roles, and so forth affect care.
- Address social determinants and drivers of health.
- Involve family/care givers or patients' identified support.
- Reassure your patient that you are and will be available to help.

### 4 Partnership

- Acknowledge the power differential between patients and providers.
- Let your patient know you will work together to find solutions and resolve challenges.

### 5 Explanations

- Devote time in treatment to understanding how patients perceive their presenting concerns. How similar or different is your perspective?
- Check with your patient often during the conversation to assess understanding.
- Use verbal clarification techniques.

### 6 Cultural Competence

- Respect your patient and their cultural beliefs.
- Practice cross-cultural awareness and inter-cultural communication; be being open to unfamiliar attitudes and behaviors.
- Learn intercultural communication skills and ways to respond to cultural differences.
- Know your limitations in addressing behavioral health concerns cross culturally, with the ability to shift focus and seek guidance when your approach is not working.

### 7 Trust

- Commit to behaviors that enhance the therapeutic relationship.
- Recognize that trust is not inherent but must be earned by medical and behavioral health clinicians.
- Recognize that self-disclosure may be difficult for some patients; consciously work and take time to establish trust.



#### Thank you for your partnership.

Please contact your Provider Relations Representative if you have questions or need assistance.

*Patient Engagement in Mental Health: Strategies to Improve Care. Retrieved 6/10/2024.*

<https://psychu.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Patient-Engagement-In-Mental-Health-Strategies-To-Improve-Care.pdf>

*The Ultimate Guide to Clinical Communication between Staff and Patients. Retrieved 6/7/2024.*

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*Respect Model. Retrieved 6/10/2024. <https://thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/assets/pdfs/resource-library/respect-model.pdf>*

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