

Common Senses Tips For Communicating with Pediatric Patients

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When you think about improving communication with patients, you might think of using social media, having mobile options, or sending appointment reminders. These tools are beneficial for some patients, but not all types of them. Paediatric patients need different communication methods so that they have a positive experience as well.

Children are often afraid of the doctor or at least nervous about going, but there are ways that you can help with this. Hi everyone, I'm Matt Money Penny, and today I'm going to give you common sense tips for communicating with paediatric patients. Before we get started though, make sure you subscribe to our YouTube channel by clicking the button below.

While you're down there, hit that alert bell icon next to it so that when we post new helpful content, you get notified. Before diving in, I want to stress that I'm not a medical professional, and how you communicate with patients in any capacity is ultimately up to you as the expert. However, as a patient and as someone who has heard complaints from others who have children, we want to share communication tips we've heard from them, as well as some that may seem like common sense.

The first thing that you can do is let your children patients warm up to you. Since they may be nervous about being at the doctor, you want to make them feel as comfortable as possible. This is where your waiting room comes into play.

Having activities for the children to play with before they head back for their visit will help keep their minds off their appointment. Thus, they'll have less anxiety. But once they're in the exam room, their fears may return.

Make conversation with children patients about topics other than their condition. This helps you get to know them and establishes a healthy relationship with them as well. If you're able to relate to them in any way, then they'll trust you even more.

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Some things you can talk about with children patients to help relate to them are the schools they go to, sports, their weekend plans, or their favourite book or movie, maybe even vacations that they've been on. This gets them talking about something they're comfortable with so that they aren't focused on their fears of the appointment itself. Next, you should make the environment comfortable.

Although this isn't a way to communicate, it helps make the process easier. A comfortable environment will help paediatric patients relax. You can decorate the waiting room and the exam rooms with fun themes, which can also be a good conversation starter for them.

Even keep small toys or soft animals in the room for patients to hold during the visit to help them stay calm, especially if they're getting something like a shot. But make sure you sanitise any items that you provide. The best way to know if patients are comfortable is by talking to them.

Ask them if there's anything you can do to improve their experience. This also shows that you care, and they might feel better about opening up to you. You should always talk with paediatric patients on their level.

Each age group has a different way that they communicate. Toddlers won't communicate the same as school-aged children. It's helpful to be silly and goofy with this very young group, but school-aged kids will like to know they can relate to you in some way, and they love talking about things they're interested in.

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This is why my first point is so helpful. Conversations with teenagers need to be different than your conversations with children. Even though they're still paediatric patients, they want to be treated like they're adults, not kids.

So talk to them with respect, and as you would with adults, and they'll be way more receptive to you. Walk your paediatric patients through their appointments so they know what to expect. Explain the process to them so that they know what will happen next, and that way they can relax a little bit.

Even preparing them for simple things can help, like warning them that the stethoscope could be cold. You could also talk to them to distract them during an unpleasant part of the appointment, such as something like a shot like I mentioned earlier. Another option is to let them help with the appointment.

Kids are very hands-on, and while they won't be able to do everything, you can let them help with some parts of the visit, such as hearing their own heartbeat. This will help them feel more in control of the experience. When you walk them through their appointment and explain things regarding their conditions, you need to use simple, understandable terms.

Usually, this information will pertain more to parents than their young kids, but you'll still want to make it a little bit understandable for the kids as well. Some older kids might be able to understand, though, if you use appropriate language. Use simpler terms, or even give examples and use analogies that they'd understand.

Now, believe it or not, your body language can also impact children's experience as well. Standing over them won't help with their anxieties with the appointment. Sit down if possible, or have small children sit on their parents' lap so that you're at the level with them.

This makes you seem less scary to small kids. Making eye contact helps as well, and it especially

shows that you're focused on your patient. If you just make eye contact with the parent, it'll make it seem like your attention isn't on the kid, and that the appointment isn't mostly about them.

The parent will be upset about this. Smile when you talk to them as well, so that you don't give any negative impressions or have anyone worry more than they have to. You can also engage the parents to help with communication with their children.

Your patients trust their parents, so if they're involved in the conversation, the kids might not feel as nervous. The parents can also help open up the conversation and get the patient to warm up, since they know what their kids like the most. Something else to keep in mind is that parents are very protective of their kids as well.

If they get stressed, they might be difficult to deal with. They could also get angry or upset over the situation and take it out on you, but it's important to stay tolerant so that you don't make the situation worse or upset the child. Try talking to them in a different room so that the patient doesn't get worked up as well, and stay relaxed and sympathetic when explaining their child's situation.

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Offer resources that can help, and show that you're there to support them. It's common for kids to be nervous about going to the doctor. They don't know what to expect, and visiting a stranger can be scary, but there are ways that you can talk to your patients to help them feel more relaxed.

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These communication efforts can go a long way for improving their experience and make them trust you for the next time that they come to visit you. If you'd like to learn more about communicating with paediatric patients, reach out to eTactics. And you already made it this far into the video, so you might as well like it, share it, and comment below.