

5 Core Strategies for Improving Patient Compliance

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Definition of Compliance

Websters:

“the action or fact of complying with a wish or command”

Translated....

“the action of following-through with actions or activities that will improve health outcomes and reduce health risks”

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5 Primary Reasons Patients Don't Comply







5-Steps for Success (and what NOT to do)

The Wrong Way

- Trying to fix everything at once
- Require too many dietary changes
- Don't meet them where they're at
- Our agenda, not theirs
- No relationship

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First – Listen, 'Hear' and Connect

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- Ask for their story – let them talk
 - Often feel overlooked or disregarded – 'crazy' or 'it's all in your head'
- If sidelining or getting off track, interrupt with a clarification

"I'm sorry to interrupt but I want to make sure I understand you correctly"

- Then redirect back to the conversation

"I Get It"

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- Convey that you really get it...
 - "Oh wow, that must have been so difficult..."
 - "I'm sorry you were treated that way..."
 - "It must be difficult for you to..."
- Connect with the heart (especially with women)
- Use language that let's them know you 'heard' them and have a plan

Belief is a Powerful Emotion

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- Consider any previous experiences; make this one different

“I know you haven’t had the best success with _____ but we do it differently around here.”

“I may not be 100% sure about exactly what’s going on in your body but I can tell you that I’m committed to helping you find out.”

“Based on everything I’ve heard you say, it seems very clear to me that a few basic things have been missed that will likely make a HUGE difference in the way you feel.”

Second – Ask Them What THEY Want

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- Never assume you know what they want
- Can be vastly different than what they are actually willing or capable of doing
- KNOWING what they *need* and ASSUMING this is *what* they want is a bad idea
- For example:
 - Practitioner determines digestive issues, blood sugar and sleep are priority
 - Patient thinks they just need help with their diet; not ready for much else
 - Goals aren’t aligned....

They Aren't Always Honest

- Patients will often nod and smile in agreement
- Not comfortable speaking up about what they *really* need
- May or may not purchase supplements
- May reschedule but have no intention of returning
- They don't come back
- And the practitioner wonders why....

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Better to Ask..... Then Listen

“How can I best help you?”

“What is the #1 thing you'd like to accomplish?”

“If you could wave a magic wand, what's the one thing you'd wish to have go away?”

“This is not about me; it's about you. What is it that you really want help with?”

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Elizabeth's Story

Elizabeth meets with you for 1 hour about her health concerns. She is clear about the direction you want to go with regard to her health and is 100% on board. Excited to get started, she purchases the required supplements, schedules her follow-up appointment and heads home.

That evening, her husband asks how it went at your office. Elizabeth is now feeling a little overwhelmed at all the information you provided and is having difficulty articulating it to her husband.

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Elizabeth's Story

He doesn't see the value in what she's trying to explain to him and is questioning her decision to continue with you along with the money she just spent. Adding to her overwhelm, she begins to wonder if she did the right thing. Maybe she did make a bad decision.

Without her husband's support at home, she's not sure this is going to work. She's too embarrassed to call back and return the supplements so she.....

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Third – Evaluate Level of Compliance

- Ask questions and listen between the lines
 - Dietary changes may be difficult
 - Cost could be an issue
 - Don't like to take pills
 - Significant illness prevents multiple changes
 - No support at home
 - History of practitioner hopping
 - May not be ready
- Ask about any objections or limitations
- Find creative ways to work around them

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“How do you feel about starting slowly and then working our way up?”

“Tell me about another time when you had to take supplements. How did that go?”

“Do you feel comfortable making some of these dietary changes?”

“Cost can definitely be a factor for some people and I absolutely want to respect that. Just let me know if there is an issue and we'll figure out a workable solution together.”

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“It’s super important to me that we are on the same page. I don’t want to ask you to do something you aren’t 100% on board with. Is there anything listed here that doesn’t feel quite right or isn’t in line with your healthcare goals?”

“I know you’ve already worked with several other practitioners and I’d love to hear what worked and what didn’t so we can be sure to move forward in helping you feel better.”

“It’s important that you have people around you who are supporting you during this process. Do you have that kind of network to help?”

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Fourth – Nurture the Relationship

- Your brand new seedling needs water
 - (Some of your existing plants er... patients probably need some too)
- Can’t leave it out in the elements and hope it survives
- Patients need regular reassurance and confidence
- Important to have frequent touch points initially
- Followed by consistent, relevant communication

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Make a Phone Call

- Call the patient at 7-8pm that evening

“Hi Elizabeth. This is Dr. Jones. I know we covered A LOT of info today and it can get a bit overwhelming so I just wanted to call and check on you. How are you doing? Do you have any questions I can answer for you?”

- This is a wonderful, unexpected surprise for the patient
- They will likely tell PLENTY of people about your gesture

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Follow-Up With An Email

- Send a follow-up email 3 days after the first appointment
 - Pick and choose which patients may need a little more watering...
- For some, consider calling back in a week
 - Check on progress
 - Offer support
 - Answer questions

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Time to Grow Your Practice!

- Wellness care is a crowded space
- Online searches provide an overwhelming # of options
- More expensive to get new patients than to take care of the ones you have
- Referrals are the lifeblood of a healthy, thriving practice
- Three key strategies:
 - Provide good clinical support
 - Maintain regular communication via email, social, local activities, in-office events, etc.
 - Be the place where 'everybody knows your name'

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Fifth – Education and Communicate

- A picture is worth a thousand words
- Small bits of health-related information keeps them engaged
- You become the authority on 'all things health and wellness'
- Creates a Name/Brand awareness in your community
- Always be authentic
- Always come from the heart
- Always stay engaged

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Building Authority and Credibility

- Like it or not, social media presence is required in the wellness space
- Maintain regular contact via email
- Offer in-office contests or promotions to create engagement and connection
- Participate in local events (i.e. blood drives, community activities, clean-up days, other volunteer activities)
- Provide additional resources (recipes, curated info, other websites, relevant blog or online article, etc.)

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Elizabeth's Story

....she decides to sleep on it and decide in the morning whether she should continue working with you or not.

But an hour or so later, she answers the phone, only to find that you are calling to check on her and see if she has any questions about what the two of you had discussed. Elizabeth was so touched and impressed with your thoughtfulness that she couldn't even remember what she was confused about earlier that evening.

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Elizabeth's Story

After you asked a few general questions, she was able to remember what she wanted clarification about. You were able to offer some additional information which made her feel much more comfortable about her health journey.

Shortly thereafter, you wrapped up the phone call and as Elizabeth hung up the phone, there was 100% certainty that she had made the right decision to work with you. And more importantly, she knew she could trust you with her health and that you were the person who was finally going to be able to help her.

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Elizabeth's Story

At your suggestion, she looked up your Facebook page online and found that there were a number of positive reviews which made her feel even more comfortable. She jumped right in and left a kind review and comment about how thoughtful you had been to call her at home after her earlier appointment.

As the evening went on, she couldn't help but think about how grateful and excited she was about her new journey.

And she knew she was in good hands.

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There are Hundred's of Elizabeth's

- And they are waiting for someone like you!
- Going the extra mile has HUGE payoffs
- It's not really about the patient not complying with your recommendations...
- It really boils down to 3 simple things:
 - Compassion
 - Connection
 - Communication

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Win-Win Situation

- Without these three things, patients don't stay engaged
- Expectations may have been unrealistic for their lifestyle and commitment level
- Financial capacity may have been stretched
- Could be for multiple reasons
- Goal is to create a win-win-win experience
- Set them up for success

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5 Core Strategies for.....

~~Improving Patient Compliance~~ Creating a Successful Wellness Practice

- Be an active listener
- Ask: How Can I Best Help You?
- Evaluate their willingness and ability to succeed
- Maintain regular/personal contact (initially)
- Stay engaged and 'top-of-mind' with regular communication

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