Guiding principles for provider-patient interactions

How can we ensure that the patient is an active partner in the provider-patient interaction? It is important that the patient's opinions, attitudes, and preferences be solicited and taken seriously even if the provider does not agree with them.

The following 6 principles promote patients' active involvement in their health and address the challenges of changing patient behavior.

1) Physicians should acknowledge that patients may be actively involved in health maintenance long before they seek medical care.

2) Patients should be empowered to be active participants in their medical care.

3) Providers should critically evaluate their own assumptions and underlying values about what constitutes a “good” patient and consider how these assumptions and values affect their communication strategies.

4) The patient’s behavior change in the medical interaction should result from a process of negotiation between provider and patient.

5) The medical system should focus on community empowerment in addition to individual empowerment.

6) Accessible and understandable outcome data will empower the community to be active participants in the elimination of health disparities.

The above principles are an excerpt from: