

COPIC Tip:

Tips for Improving the Physician and Patient Relationship

One of the foundational goals of COPIC’s 3Rs Program is to help maintain the physician-patient relationship. This starts by coaching providers to engage in open and honest conversations with patients and may include personal follow up with a patient after an unanticipated outcome. Below are suggestions on how health care providers can interact with patients in order to improve their relationships.

1

Make it personal. It is important in the physician-patient relationship to establish trust. To instill confidence in someone, you must have a relationship. This includes empathetic and caring communication between the physician and patient.

2

Try to see it from the patient’s point of view. It may be a “known possible complication,” but recognize the impact to the patient and his or her family. Ask questions and listen without interrupting. The impact could be emotional as well as financial. It’s not always just about the money.

3

Encourage the patient to ask questions. This includes suggesting that the patient write down any questions that come to mind at a later time.

4

Be available for further discussions with the patient and the family. Provide the patient with an appropriate way to reach you for further communication.