Use the following checklist to help ensure quality communication with your patients.

**Initial Contact:**

[ ]  Introduce yourself by name.

[ ]  Make eye contact.

[ ]  Make physical contact (shake hand, touch arm).

[ ]  Ask the patient how they would like to be addressed.

[ ]  Record their preference in their chart.

[ ]  Explain what you will be doing.

[ ]  Ask the patient if they have any questions.

[ ]  Listen to and look at the patient. Nod your head to indicate you are actively listening if continuing to record information in the medical record.

**Questioning:**

[ ]  Use open-ended questions whenever possible.

[ ]  Ask questions one at a time.

[ ]  Allow the patient to respond in their own terms.

**Facilitation:**

[ ]  Encourage patients to continue, using phrases such as “go on.”

[ ]  Use nonverbal cues to demonstrate interest, such as nodding your head.

[ ]  Paraphrase or restate what the patient has said for clarification.

[ ]  Do not interrupt the patient.

[ ]  Acknowledge and empathize with your patient’s feelings: “You seem worried” or “I sense you are concerned.”

[ ]  Avoid paternalistic or authoritarian statements, such as “Don’t worry; you don’t need to understand what this is all about.”

[ ]  Use understandable lay language, avoiding technical medical terms.

**Summarize:**

[ ]  Conclude by summarizing what occurred during the visit.

[ ]  Tell the patient when you will expect to receive test results, if applicable.

[ ]  Verify the patient understands treatment plans or instructions.

[ ]  Develop a plan with the patient for future care, if appropriate.