



Why Care Partners Should Attend and Participate in Appointments

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Jeff Folloder:

I'll grudgingly accept that men may bottle up their feelings a little bit. But with that in mind, it's a fair statement to make that in the case of someone not being willing to effectively share what's going on it's up to the caregiver. Yes? No? Okay. Let's say that this is one of the roles of the caregivers. Now, this is somewhat incendiary here. What happens if the caregiver feels like the doc just isn't listening? Going to start off on the end.

Dr. Daver:

I think that there [are] a few things you have to look at. One is if this is a one-time occurrence or if this is a general feeling you get about your doctor. And, you know, I think each doctor-patient relationship is unique, and there are different personalities just like patients are a difficult personality than physicians. So I think it's still on the patient. It is your health, and you must make the best effort to make it clear, you know, maybe write it down and tell the doctor, look, I have just three major questions that I would like, you know.

Because our fear, and I know a lot of physicians, is like, you know, you've got 20 patients, you've got four hours, we need to budget time. But if a patient tells me I've got these three questions, can I please ask those first, I will usually say, yes, that's perfect. I know there's a finite number. It's not going to go—and you ask them that. Usually you will get a positive response. He will answer those three or four questions right away and then tell you whatever he or she feels like, you know, has to be done for the treatment.

If on a recurrent basis you're having difficulty communicating with your physician, then I think you need to tell your physician that and say, look, I'm—I have these questions. I feel like, you know, you're busy, or I'm not getting these answers. Could you please explain this to me? Could you please write this down? Could you have your nurse or physician assistant maybe provide me some additional information, some contact groups, some Internet sites.

And I think—I would be surprised if a physician at that time does not respond or does not take an extra few minutes to explain it. And sometimes it's okay to say that, that, you know, I'm feeling—I'm not feeling as comfortable, I'm not feeling as I'm getting enough information, and please—basically you're saying, please spend a little bit more time with me, and that's okay.

Jeff Folloder:

Linda?

Linda Cooper:

I think the other thing that I will own is that as healthcare professionals we sometimes fail to say to the caregiver, are there any things you're concerned about? We have come a long ways.

We talked about in the caregivers support group in acknowledging the valuable role of caregivers and having support groups for caregivers, but we still need to remember to say, do you have any questions or concerns before they leave your room or my office?

Jeff Folloder:

I'd just like to share that when I was going through active treatment with my issues we would come in literally every two to three days, and my wife always accompanied me. And as we were going through the health inventory, rate your pain level on a scale of zero to 10, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, we would always get to that part about fatigue. And the nurse practitioner would say, rate your fatigue on a scale of one to 10, and I'd say two. And my wife would drop her notes, which was my hint that I'm lying.

Because a two was actually an eight or a nine, and the doctor needed to know the truth. And fatigue, again being one of the most debilitating things that we're dealing with, it's got to be communicated effectively.

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