

# Your Voice. Your Health. Your Future.



Self-advocacy means speaking up for your health needs, asking questions, and making informed decisions about your care.

When you are an active part of your healthcare, you can:

- ✓ Communicate more effectively
- ✓ Build stronger relationships
- ✓ Reduce misunderstandings
- ✓ Make confident decisions
- ✓ Receive safer, better care



## You and your healthcare provider are partners.

Working together leads to better understanding, better care, and better health.



This guide will help you communicate, connect, and take charge of your health with confidence.

**Let's get started.**



# Resources & Support You Are Not Alone.



## Trusted Health Information



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)  
[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)



World Health Organization (WHO)  
[www.who.int](http://www.who.int)



MedlinePlus  
[www.medlineplus.gov](http://www.medlineplus.gov)

## Mental Health Support



988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline  
Call or Text 988  
24/7 free and confidential support

## Patient Advocacy Resources



Patient Advocate Foundation  
[www.patientadvocate.org](http://www.patientadvocate.org)  
Helps patients navigate healthcare and access the care they need.



## In an Emergency

Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.  
If you are experiencing a medical or mental health emergency, get help right away.



Take care of yourself. Ask for help.  
Your health and safety come first.  
**You deserve support. You matter.**



# Your Health, Your Voice



A Patient Self-Advocacy Guide  
for Better Healthcare  
Communication and Support



Communicate clearly.



Build supportive relationships.



Make informed choices.



Your voice matters.  
Your health matters.



# Effective Communication Skills

Clear and respectful communication helps patients feel heard, understood, and supported.



## 1. Speak Clearly

- Describe your symptoms honestly.
- Be specific about your concerns.
- Don't be afraid to ask for explanations you understand.



## 2. Practice Active Listening

- Ask clarifying questions.
- Repeat key instructions back.
- Pay attention to tone, body language, and emotions.
- Listening builds understanding and trust.



## 3. Use "I" Statements

- "I feel concerned about these symptoms."
- "I would like more information about my treatment options."
- "I need help understanding what happens next."



Effective communication is more than just words. Tone, timing, empathy, active listening, and emotional awareness all influence how messages are understood. Clear and respectful communication helps build trust, reduce misunderstandings, and improve healthcare experiences.

# The Role of Relationships in Health

Supportive relationships can improve mental, emotional, and physical well-being.



## Supportive Relationships Can:

- ✓ Reduce stress and anxiety
- ✓ Encourage healthy habits
- ✓ Increase confidence and self-esteem
- ✓ Provide emotional support during challenging times
- ✓ Improve recovery and overall well-being



## Unhealthy Relationships Can:

- ✗ Increase stress and worry
- ✗ Create emotional exhaustion
- ✗ Lead to poor communication
- ✗ Cause feelings of isolation or insecurity
- ✗ Negatively impact mental and physical health



Relationships play an important role in emotional, mental, and physical health. Supportive communication and healthy connections can reduce stress, improve confidence, encourage healthy habits, and help people feel understood during difficult situations.



## Build Healthy Connections

Healthy communication builds trust, understanding, and stronger support systems. You deserve relationships that uplift and respect you.

# Important Self-Advocacy Skills

Being informed and prepared helps you participate confidently in your healthcare.



## 1. Be Prepared

- Write down your symptoms and concerns.
- Bring a list of medications and supplements.
- Prepare questions before your appointments.
- Bring a trusted person for support if needed.



## 2. Ask Questions

- What are my treatment options?
- What are the risks and benefits?
- How will this affect my daily life?
- Is there anything I should watch for?



## 3. Know Your Rights

- You have the right to respectful care.
- You have the right to privacy and confidentiality.
- You have the right to be involved in decisions about your care.
- You have the right to a second opinion.



## Quick Self-Advocacy Checklist



Bring notes and lists



Track symptoms and changes



Ask questions and speak up



Request clarification



Follow up if needed



You are your best advocate. Your voice matters. You have the power to take charge of your health.