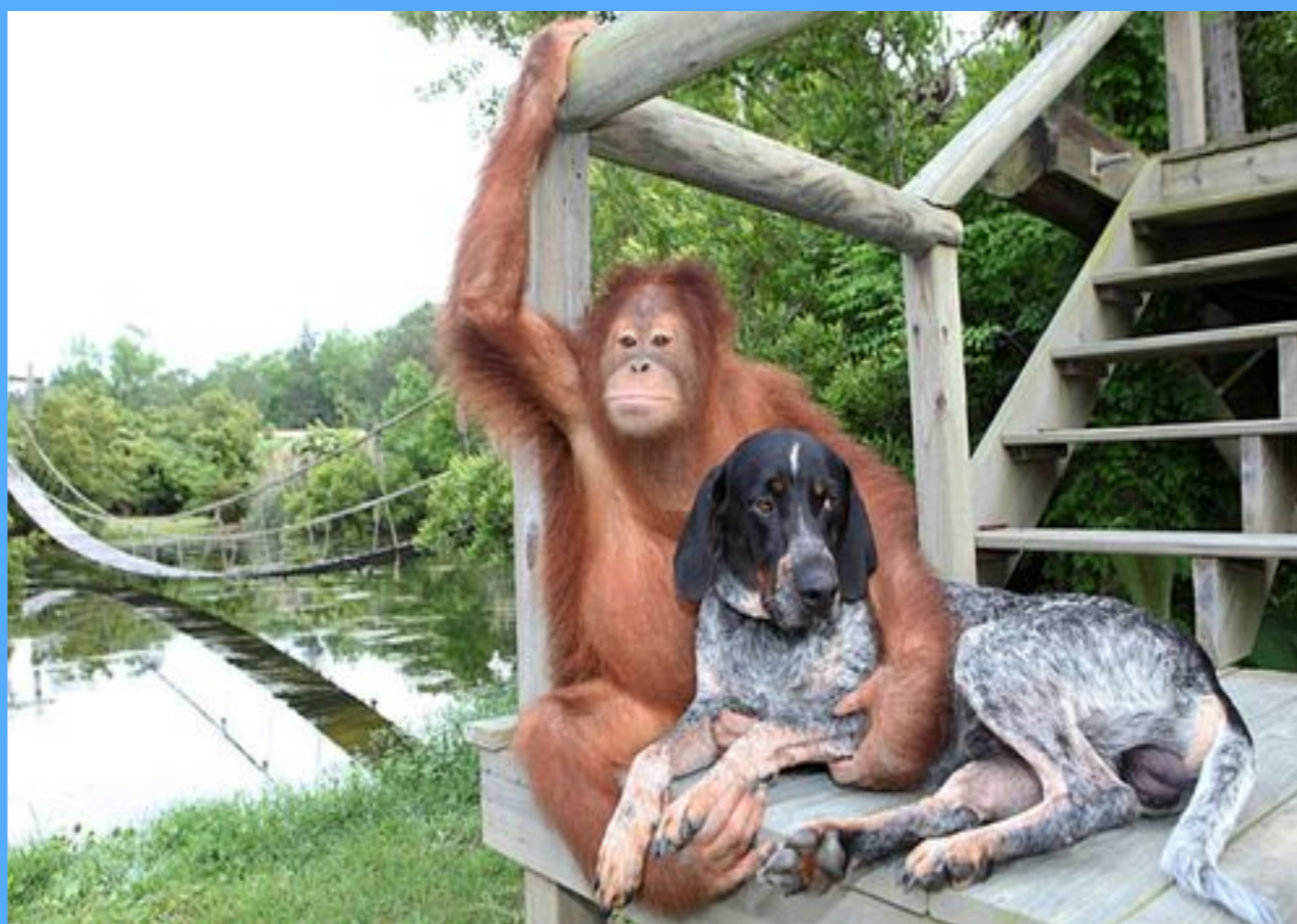


# Partnering with Your Healthcare Provider



# What is a Partner

**Merriam Webster**: One associated with another especially in an action

**The Free Dictionary**: one who is united or associated with another in an activity or a sphere of common interest.

Both of the above definitions can be easily applied to a relationship between a healthcare provider and a patient

# How Healthcare Partnerships and Resiliency are Related Starts by Redefining Resiliency

**Merriam- Webster**: The ability of a strained body to recover its size and shape after a deformation, caused especially by a compressive stress

**Dictionary.com**: The ability to recover from an illness, depression, adversity or the like.

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# Improving Resiliency through Healthcare

- **Children**: since resiliency increases by having supportive relationships that create trust, encouragement and reassurance, a physician is in a position to provide this
- **Adults**: since adults can have improved resilience with increased connections and taking care of oneself, a healthcare provider can also be in the perfect role to provide this for the stressed or ill patient
- Improvement in resiliency in children and adults via the physician–patient relationship is more likely to happen if it is based on a supportive partnership

# A “Typical” Doctor–Patient Interaction in Today’s Medical System

# What Do Patients Want from Their Physicians

- According to a BMJ article in 2003
  1. Eye Contact
  2. **Partnership**
  3. Communication
  4. Time
  5. Appointment Availability

# Does Partnership Between Physicians and Patients Improve Our Health?

## Answer: YES

### 1. “Assessing the Effects of Physician–Patient Interaction on the Outcomes of Chronic Disease”

- Kaplan, Greenfield, Ware, Institute for the Improvement of Medical Care and Health, March 1989

Four clinical trials showed better physiology, day to day function/lifestyle, and subjective improvement when better communication occurs between doctor and patient

### 2. The Institute for Healthcare Communication, July 2011

A physician’s ability to explain, listen and empathize with a patient, increased the patient's ability to follow through with treatment plans, initiate self care and preventive health activities, improve physically, and increase patient satisfaction

# 5 Steps to Forming a Partnership with your Doctor

Psychology Today,  
Dr. Leona Wen, MD

- Find a Doctor who Agrees with Shared Decision Making
- Express your Intent in working together in partnership with your doctor
- Help your doctor by telling a clear story
- Make sure you understand every test ordered and why
- Make Decisions together with a diagnosis in mind



# Traits of a Doctor Who Shares in Decision Making

- A Doctor should listen to you
- A doctor should seem to care about your situation
- A doctor should ask you if you understand or have any questions

Signs to be aware of are impatience and defensiveness

# .Express Your Intent

- Let the doctor know at the beginning of your initial appointment that you want to work together and be a part of the decision making

# Tell a Good Clear Story

1. Start at the beginning and go chronologically
2. Describe the severity of symptoms and progression over hours/days
3. How have symptoms **impacted your life**. i.e. have you had to leave work early; have you lost sleep

# Tell a Good Clear Story (Continued)

4. Use simple language, not medical terms
5. Tell the doctor upfront if there's a certain diagnosis you're worried about, such as cancer or heart disease
6. **WRITE IT DOWN:** Keep a journal of symptoms, things that have helped, hurt, and bring it to the visit.

# Make Sure You Understand Every Test That is Ordered

- If labs, x-rays or procedures are ordered, what are the tests and why is the doctor ordering them.
- Will the tests change the management of your condition
- Are there risks or harm from doing the tests; if so, what are some other options

# Make Decisions Together with a Diagnosis in Mind

- Tests should be done to help you find a diagnosis
- If there are treatments, you should know how long they are for, when you might feel better, and will there be any reactions from the treatments. You can always ask if there are other alternatives

# A Provider's Role in Partnership

- Listening skills
- A doctor who makes sure to use terms you understand, or at least asks you if you understand everything discussed in a visit
- Taking enough time to address important issues
- **Compassion**

# Compassion

- **Dictionary.com**: A feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for others accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate the suffering.



# What Does Compassion Look Like



# How Does Compassion Feel?

There are no real words or pictures that can describe this.  
Perhaps someday we will have the ability to measure the energy of compassion  
between two people



# Your Role in the Partnership

1. Prepare for every visit
  - Write down symptoms, timelines, what you've tried
  - Bring list of meds, vitamins or supplements
  - Bring copies of any recent tests
2. Bring a written list of what you want to talk about
3. Be honest: please try to present the most medically serious issues first, in case there are time constraints
4. Take an active role by asking questions or directing the plan of action

# Your Role in the Partnership (continued)

5. Learn all you can about your health problem
6. If you use the internet, try to use national organizations Their information tends to be based on a large body of medical evidence
  - i.e. the American Diabetic Association, The National Cancer Institute, the CDC (Center for Disease Control)
7. Have compassion and respect towards your doctor: no doorknob remarks, realize that time can be limited; a doctor can have a bad day too. We all need mutual respect.

# Resources

- The Agency for Healthcare Research Quality: gives good information to be best prepared for a doctors visit [www.ahrq.gov/consumer](http://www.ahrq.gov/consumer)
- National Institute of Health, Clear Communication: [www.nih.gov/clearcommunication/talktoyourdoctor.htm](http://www.nih.gov/clearcommunication/talktoyourdoctor.htm)
- National Patient Safety Foundation: They have lists of what both doctors and patients can do to be in better partnerships, [www.npsf.org](http://www.npsf.org)