Interacting With Your Doctor

Long-term survivors say communication, collaboration and trust are vital.

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Having a good relationship with your doctor is key to living healthy with HIV. In addition to treatment adherence, having a good relationship with your doctor can address important concerns, such as weight gain and other side effects.

To that end, here are some tips from long-term survivors on how to build and maintain a positive doctor-patient rapport.

Steve Puppe

Communication. “Tell your doctor everything,” says Robert Gillum, age 54. “If you’re not honest with your doctor, they really can’t create a plan or work with you on a plan.”

“Be transparent,” says LaTrischa Miles, age 61. “If you’re not truthful, that just hurts you. I encourage people to write things down in-between doctor visits. If you haven’t gotten all your questions answered, ask your top three to five questions and reschedule a follow-up appointment.”

Collaboration. “I’ve always worked collaboratively with my doctors,” Gillum explains. “I don’t do what they tell me to do. We look at my health together. They make suggestions, and we have a

conversation.”

Pat MigliorePhoto: Tegra Stone Nuess

“It’s nice to have good chemistry with your doctor,” says Pat Migliore, age 68, “There’s no reason you should be afraid of your doctor. I expect my doctor to have an open mind and heart.”

“It’s not just about what your doctor is going to recommend,” says Miles. “You need to have a partnership. Get more HIV education and learn to read your labs. If you have a great doctor, they are always going to do what is best for you. But what do you know about HIV, and how can you discuss that with your doctor and be in partnership?”

Trust. “Be able to trust the doctor that you work with,” Gillum says. “If you can’t, try to find

somebody that fits. If I don’t feel like my doctor is listening to me or doesn’t have time for me, I find somebody that does.”

Robert GillumJamey Guy

“Find a doctor that you can trust,” Migliore says. “I trust my doctor’s knowledge. I also trust that he is keeping up with what’s happening now and continuing his HIV education.”

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