

GOOD DOCTOR'S TRAITS

Ever wished to find a great, reliable and empathic health professional that suits *your* personal needs while keeping the overview and empowering you to easily be on top of your health?

Listening and learning from our clients over the years, here are 12 of the most valued traits your medical doctor or health professional should bring along, to ensure you will be taken serious and well taken care of in any circumstance. These traits are also what we aspire for in our daily work.

We believe everyone deserves to have a great doctor!

HOW TO TEST

Below you will find 12 traits along with a short description. Admitted, it might feel strange to sit and try to test your doctor with a checklist ticking the boxes trait by trait. We believe that just knowing these points will make you more sensitive to know what to look out for.

If however you would actively test you health professional, try the following three:

1. **ASK FOR A SUMMARY**
2. **ASK FOR AN EXPLANATION**
3. **CONVERSATION TECHNIQUE**

Asking for a summary can already reveal so many things: have you been listened to, did your doctor understand what you said and can he communicate it back to you. Three boxes ticked. Additionally asking for a summary or an explanation, both will already reveal, if and how much time your doctor is willing to make for you. Note, that while she/he might not have time for you right now does not mean you're not valued. An answer like "today's schedule is rather tight, would you be ok if we explain this thoroughly during our next date?" seems like a good approach, too.

Ultimately there is no "One correct way" for the below traits. We personally would always prefer someone admitting their limits and learning FOR us e.g. by looking things up, instead of pretending to know it all. For many of the below traits, there are several suitable positive answers or reactions.





BEHAVIOUR

The appearance and the nonverbal behaviour shape the first impression. If a doctor pays attention to that matter, e.g. a neat outward appearance and maintaining eye-contact, it is already a good sign. Eye-contact and openness in appearance is a strong and important factor when creating a trustful relationship. To make your choice, you can listen your gut-feeling and rely on your knowledge of human nature.



TIME

Many doctors are busy and have a tight schedule for their consultations plus emergency consultations. Still, it makes a big difference, whether the time for you really feels like time for only you. If you want to make sure, ask in the beginning, what the time frame is like and whether that matches the concerns you are going to address. 15 Minutes should be a minimum. A doctor with a focused time-management will take all of you questions seriously but will prioritise your concerns with you and offer options for further appointments.



QUESTION TECHNIQUE

A good talk between you and your doctor should be led by your doc. But that doesn't mean you should just say „yes“ and „no“ to closed questions. The opposite: your doctor listens first to your matter for 1-2 minutes. Then he/she might interrupt you to pose some questions. These questions should be as open as possible, although sometimes facts will be asked for a simple „yes“ or „no“. There should always be room for YOUR questions. And note: there are no silly or stupid questions. Ask whatever boggles you. Look out for: A doctor who lets you talk first.



IS MY DOC LISTENING?

This is one of the most important questions. It implies: is he/she REALLY listening to my words and my concerns? To make sure you really have been heard, you could ask your doctor „Could you please give me a short summary of my concern, for me to make sure I explained myself clearly enough?“ Even better: your doctor gives you a short summary proactively at some point during your talk.



NO DR. KNOW-IT-ALL

While doctors have gone through a long academic and specialty training, they are only human with a certain brain capacity. Sciences are dynamic and many innovations pop up in every field. So NO doctor can know it all! And no doctor should believe or behave like he/she would be all-knowing. Instead of pretending, your doctor should communicate openly at what point he needs to research on further information. It is a great sign if your doctor is willing to look something up or even do some extra research - just for you.



TRANSPARENCY

At the point where it comes to finding a solution for your matter, you should be able to understand the process and be part of the decision-making. Your doctor's trains of thoughts should be communicated as open as possible AND in a language that you understand. Often there is more than one option - and you always should be the one to choose, based on being well-informed. Make clear whether you understood everything right and don't pretend if not!

If you're unsure why came to a conclusion, you could eg ask "What makes you think my issue is XY and not something else?"



YOUR SOLUTION

There is no one fits all solution, rather there is a bouquet of options, depending on your situation, the medical findings, your level of suffering. If you buy trousers, you choose different waists, lengths, among fabric, color and so on, giving you a bunch of solutions. You have YOUR goals, demands, daily routine, beliefs, so the chosen therapy should fit your willingness to contribute and take into account how far the symptoms constrain your daily life. If you ever hear „If you want to get healthy, you MUST ...“ then better back off!



THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX

There are many different healing concepts available. Most doctors are trained in the conventional academic way. Some tend to generalise all other concepts as non-effective, even though there are scientifically proven „alternative“ concepts. A certain openness towards „alternative“ healing concepts shows willingness to think outside the box, even if not offered by the doc her/himself. To find out, ask about alternative concepts you are especially interested in.



VIEW ON HEALTH

No one's view on health should be pressed in boxes, it should be non-binary. It shall not be healthy vs sick, prevention vs treatment. Small issues can increase over time and lead to severe troubles. Hence, taking small „inconveniences“ seriously enough, listening to them and make a plan to avoid escalation together should be the basis of every doctor's view on health. If your concerns ever get brushed off with "That's nothing." without a differentiated explanation, you might want to consider looking for someone else.



MISTAKES AND ERRORS

Everyone makes mistakes now and then. Your doctor should be open about failures and be able to explain them and of course apologise. But a pattern of sloppiness, communication problems, and errors suggests that something is going on behind the scenes.

For certain procedures, it is advisable to ask how many times the doctor has done this before and with which outcome.



MATCHING AVAILABILITY

Your doctor should not subordinate his availability to yours. But you shouldn't either. Instead you should find someone who's availability and means to get in touch match yours. If you always need to take a day off just to get yourself informed on a small health issue, you're likely to wait until your level of suffering is too high. A low threshold in seeing you doc could avoid this.

Look out for: matching opening times, e.g. a day with early or late opening hours. Other options could be weekend hours or telemedicine.



BONUS

Your doctor shares similar interests, for example traveling, sport, music, literature... so there is something else to chat about enthusiastically once in a while. Here, the human factor kicks in and creates true interest on both sides. Especially when it comes to hobby-related medical problems, this can help a lot.

