

# Enhancing the Therapeutic Alliance (TA) for Patients with Chronic Pain

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Therapeutic Alliance (TA)	
Definition:	“The sense of collaboration, warmth, and support between client and therapist”
Key Features:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Agreement on goals</li> <li>2. Agreement on interventions</li> <li>3. Empathy, compassion, mutual respect</li> </ol>

Verbal Communication for Therapeutic Alliance	
<p><b>Enhancing</b></p> <p>Statements of empathy “We” statements Statements of understanding Non-judgement Summary statements Statements of reflection Motivational interviewing Generate excitement</p>	<p><b>Inhibiting</b></p> <p>Verbal hostility Talking down Speaking for patient Suggesting solutions Lecturing patient</p>

Non-Verbal Communication for Therapeutic Alliance	
<p><b>Enhancing</b></p> <p>Open body language Consistent eye contact Positioned level with patient Empathetic facial expressions Active listening – nodding, etc. Non-threatening physical touch</p>	<p><b>Inhibiting</b></p> <p>Closed body language Looking away Sitting/standing above patient Flat facial expression Overly intimate physical touch Restrictively arranged treatment room</p>

Enhancing TA: Treatment Phases		
Treatment Phase	Principles	Examples
Subjective	Acknowledge frustration	“I understand you’re feeling...”
	Re-direct negativity	“I hear you say ‘x’, but I want to point out ‘y’...”
	Open ended questions	“How does ‘x’ influence your daily life?”
	Affirmations (comment on positive behavior)	“I understand ‘x’ is challenging for you. You demonstrate good self-awareness.”
	Reflections	“You struggle with ‘x’, and you worry about ‘y’”
	Summary statements	“Your ‘x’ limits your ability to do ‘y’, which makes you feel ‘z’. Is that correct?”
	Explore patient beliefs	“Why do you think your ‘x’ gives you pain?”
	Collaborative goals	“What would you most like to be able to do in __ weeks?”
Objective	Explanation of findings	“Your initial limitations in ‘x’ reduced when we did ‘y’, so we’ll do things like ‘y’ for __ weeks and then re-assess.”
Treatment Planning	Collaborative treatment	“what’s the most important thing you’d like to achieve together?”
	Identify barriers	“How confident are you that you can consistently do these activities? If not, why?”