



DocTalk Coaching

Physician Communication Coaching Report

Physician: Dr. Christine Franklin

Department/Specialty: Hospital Medicine

Hospital/Organization: Holy Name University Hospital

Referring Leader: Dr. Wanda Florentino, Chief Medical Officer

Coaching Period: November 2025 - January 2026 (3 months)

Modules Completed: 4 Modules (4 hours total coaching)

1. Reason for Referral

You referred Dr. Christine Franklin to the DocTalk Coaching program following several recent patient complaints related to communication and lower-than-expected patient experience scores (including HCAHPS communication domains). The goal of this coaching engagement was to support Dr. Franklin in strengthening physician–patient communication skills that influence trust, patient understanding, and overall patient experience.

2. Physician Engagement in the Coaching Process

Dr. Franklin participated in all four coaching modules over a three-month period. Throughout the program, she demonstrated strong engagement in the coaching process and a clear commitment to improving her communication with patients and families. She arrived with specific goals related to improving challenging conversations and was highly receptive to feedback. Dr. Franklin actively reflected on her

communication approaches and demonstrated willingness to try new strategies during tailored, scenario-based skills practice.

3. Physician Communication Goals

During the initial coaching session, Dr. Franklin identified several goals for improving her communication skills, particularly in challenging clinical situations. These included:

- Improving conversations when sharing serious or difficult news
- Navigating challenging family dynamics during inpatient care
- Strengthening her ability to elicit patient and family perspectives
- Demonstrating empathy more effectively during emotionally charged conversations
- Building trust and alignment with patients early in clinical encounters

Dr. Franklin specifically focused on strengthening communication behaviors aligned with **Habit 2 (Elicit the Patient's Perspective)** and **Habit 3 (Demonstrate Empathy)**, while also improving aspects of **Habit 1 (Invest in the Beginning)** related to building trust and aligning herself with patients.

4. Practice Scenarios Addressed During Coaching

Across the four coaching modules, Dr. Franklin practiced communication strategies through collaborative, applied scenarios reflecting common experiences in hospital-based communication challenges. These included:

- A patient with **delirium** whose family did not understand why the patient could not yet be discharged home
- A challenging family situation in which a patient with **limited English proficiency** preferred that her daughter interpret for her
- A conversation with a family member who had read online about a **non-evidence-based treatment** and wanted to pursue that option rather than guideline-concordant care

These scenarios allowed Dr. Franklin to practice communication strategies for addressing misunderstanding, navigating family dynamics, and responding to misinformation in a structured environment with real-time coaching and feedback.

5. Communication Skills Development (The *Adapted* Four Habits Model)

Habit 1 – Invest in the Beginning (Building Trust and Alignment)

Dr. Franklin practiced acknowledging patient concerns early in the conversation and explicitly aligning herself with patients and families to establish partnership in care.

Progress observed:

Increased attention to building rapport early in the encounter and signaling alignment before providing recommendations.

Habit 2 – Elicit the Patient’s Perspective

Dr. Franklin focused on using open-ended questions and reflective listening to better understand patient and family beliefs, concerns, and expectations.

Progress observed:

Improved ability to elicit perspectives prior to providing explanations, allowing her to identify misunderstandings and concerns earlier.

Habit 3 – Demonstrate Empathy

Dr. Franklin practiced multiple approaches to demonstrating empathy, including the use of silence, validating statements, and open-ended prompts such as *“Tell me more.”*

Progress observed:

Greater comfort acknowledging emotions and allowing space for patients and families to express concerns, with more consistent use of empathic statements.

Habit 4 – Invest in the End (Ensuring Understanding and Shared Decision Making)

Dr. Franklin worked on summarizing key points, checking for understanding, and outlining next steps in care.

Progress observed:

Improved clarity in closing conversations and supporting shared understanding of the care plan.

6. Overall Outcomes of Coaching

By the conclusion of the coaching modules, Dr. Franklin demonstrated improvement in several core communication competencies, including:

- Structuring complex or emotionally challenging conversations more effectively
- Eliciting patient and family perspectives before moving into clinical explanations
- Demonstrating empathy through validating statements, silence, and open-ended questions
- Building trust and aligning herself with patients and families during clinical encounters

Dr. Franklin showed a thoughtful and reflective approach to improving her communication skills and consistently engaged with the coaching process.

7. Recommendations for Continued Growth

To reinforce skills developed during coaching, we recommend continued attention to:

- Eliciting patient and family perspectives early in conversations
- Using empathic responses to acknowledge emotional concerns
- Maintaining alignment with patients and families when discussing difficult clinical realities

Ongoing reflection on challenging encounters and periodic refresher coaching sessions may further support continued skill development.

8. Closing

We appreciate the opportunity to work with Dr. Franklin and to support Holy Name University Hospital's commitment to high-quality physician–patient communication and patient-centered care.

Please feel free to contact us if you would like additional information about Dr. Franklin's participation or the DocTalk Coaching program in general.

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