

## **5 KEY POINTS ABOUT EMPATHY**

- 1. Empathy is important in clinical practice because research shows that it will lead to better outcomes for the patients; reduces the risk of malpractice claims; increases physician job satisfaction; improves patient satisfaction with care.**
- 2. Shared neural circuits between self and other are involved in perceiving motor actions, touch, and pain**
- 3. Some ways of managing your own emotions in a clinical setting include awareness of your emotions, avoiding automatic responses, taking a breath, stepping out, and refocusing on the patient's perspective**
- 4. Barriers to empathy include time pressures; patients exerting emotional pressure on the clinician (anger, attacking, manipulating, criticizing; non-adherent); lack of awareness of patients' and your own emotions; and negative judgment toward patients**
- 5. Empathy can be conveyed through tone of voice and through posture (leaning forward to indicate attention; avoiding a dominant posture by sitting down with the patient; eliminating physical barriers, such as a desk)**