Providing Excellent Health Care in a Multicultural World

Health Literacy & Cultural Competency
Objectives

- Setting the stage for excellent care
- Define health literacy and explain the extent of the problem
- Highlight the importance of cultural competence
- Review ways to improve patient understanding
Who Is Our Customer?

- Patient
- Patient’s family or significant others
- External customers
  - Accreditors
  - Regulating agencies
- Colleagues
Service Excellence

- On-stage: where patients and other customers see us.
- Off-stage: with coworkers (without customer contact).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>On-stage:</th>
<th>Off-stage:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Smile</td>
<td>□ Can speak and act with familiar courtesy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Show professional courtesy</td>
<td>□ Discuss problems with intent of fixing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Introduce yourself and your role in patient’s care</td>
<td>□ Take breaks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Undivided attention for patient and family</td>
<td>□ Sharing feelings, venting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Service Excellence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>As</th>
<th>Bs</th>
<th>Cs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anticipate</strong> what the patient may need</td>
<td><strong>Body Language</strong> makes up 93% of our message</td>
<td><strong>Care</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ask</strong> the patient what he/she wants</td>
<td><strong>Behaviors</strong> say more than our words</td>
<td><strong>Concern</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Answer</strong> questions so that patient understands</td>
<td><strong>Bonds</strong> are formed when we meet customers</td>
<td><strong>Commitment</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>
Body Language

- Communication is:
  - 93% body language and other communication cues.
    - Paralinguistic cues: pitch, volume, tone of speech.
  - Only 7% of communication is comprised of words themselves.

Body Language

Which video demonstrates service excellence through body language and speech?

Insert demonstration video #1 here

Insert demonstration video #2 here
Health Literacy

- Definition: Capacity of an individual to obtain, process and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions.

- Patient may need:
  - Visual literacy
  - Computer literacy
  - Information literacy
  - Numerical or computational literacy

Health Literacy

Largest Study Conducted to Date on Health Literacy Found

33% Were unable to read basic health care materials

42% Could not comprehend directions for taking medication on an empty stomach

26% Were unable to understand information on an appointment slip

43% Did not understand the rights and responsibilities section of a Medicaid application

60% Did not understand a standard informed consent

Health Literacy

More Than 90 Million People in the US Have Difficulty Reading

- Approximately 40 to 44 Million Adults in the US Are Functionally Illiterate
- Approximately 50 Million Are Marginally Illiterate
- Average Reading Skills of Adults in the US Are Between the 8th and 9th Grade Levels
- Cannot Perform Basic Reading Tasks Required to Function in Society
- Have Trouble Reading Maps and Completing Standard Forms
- Louisiana: 16% of adults lack basic proficiency

Implications of low health literacy:
- Poor health outcomes
- Underutilization of preventive services
- Overutilization of health services
- Unnecessary expenditures
- Limited effectiveness of treatment
- Needless patient suffering
- Higher patient dissatisfaction
- Higher provider frustration

Low Health Literacy costs the U.S. at least $106 billion annually.
Cultural Competence

- Definition: Acknowledgement and use of cultural and social factors that surround health, healing, illness, and the delivery of healthcare.
  - Recognition and respect for different traditions.
  - Responsiveness to health beliefs, practices and needs of diverse patient populations.
- Lack of cultural awareness is a reason for health care disparities.

Changing demographics in Louisiana:

2000-2010:

- 28% increase in Asian population.
- 78% increase in Hispanic or Latino population.
- 58% increase in Native American or Other Pacific native population.
- Essentially stable African-American population
- 0.70% decrease in white, non-Hispanic population.

Cultural Competence

An Amish woman undergoes a cesarean delivery. After surgery, the woman and her husband are interviewed by a social worker who was called by a nurse to see the couple because they had no health insurance. The social worker immediately begins to tell them how to enroll in Medicaid. They are visibly upset and will no longer talk to the social worker. They refuse to complete any paperwork for Medicaid. They ask to leave the hospital as soon as possible.

- Social worker did not recognize that Amish people generally do not accept what they consider to be welfare.
- SW could help the couple contact other Amish community members to provide financial, other needed assistance to the couple.

Improve Patient Understanding

Consider:

- What language does patient prefer?
  - Every patient has the right to a *validated* medical interpreter.
- What does the patient want to know?
- Can the patient to repeat back what you have said?
Improve Patient Understanding

1. Tailor communication skills to individual.
2. Tailor health information to the intended user.
3. Develop written materials that reinforce the imparted information.

Tailor Communication Skills

- Use open-ended questions.
- Use medically-trained interpreters.
  - Every patient has the right to a certified medical interpreter.
- Check for comprehension by asking questions.
- Train staff and colleagues in patient communication with cultural competency.

Tailor Information to Intended Users

- Health information should reflect users’ age.
- Include target users in development (pre-test) and implementation (post-test) of written materials.
- Consider cultural factors – race, ethnicity, language, religion, nationality, age, gender, sexual orientation, income level and occupation.
Developing Written Materials

- ≥12 point font.
- Limit to one simple message if possible.
- Focus on the action.
- Use active voice.
- Use familiar language.
- Avoid jargon.
- Use visual aids whenever possible.
# Improve Patient Understanding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instead of Using This Word</th>
<th>Consider Using This One</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benign</td>
<td>Harmless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronic</td>
<td>Happens again and again; does not end</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardiac</td>
<td>Heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edema</td>
<td>Swelling; build up of fluid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatigue</td>
<td>Tired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screening</td>
<td>Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intake</td>
<td>What you eat or drink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generic</td>
<td>Not a brand name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adverse events</td>
<td>Side effects</td>
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</table>
Rosa is 55 y.o. Hispanic female with a history of Type 1 DM who goes to clinic with complaint of recurrent fainting spells. Provider draws blood and reviews her meds (insulin, ACE inhibitor, atorvastatin); patient has hyperlipidemia and hypoglycemia. Doctor tells nurse he is frustrated with his non-compliant patient.

- Doctor should ask if Rosa needs a Spanish-language interpreter.
- Does the patient understand her medication and diet regimen?
Summary

- On-stage or off-stage?
- Body language communicates a lot.
- Does patient understand their health and treatment?
- Have you tailored your message to the individual?
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