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The Importance of Communication Skills for Physical Therapists in Culturally Competent Environment

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ParuchuriIntroduction

Cultural competence is “ a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals that enables effective work in cross-cultural situations” as per American Physical Therapy Association. While the cultural competency includes awareness, knowledge, and skills, it is also essential to convert these constructs into appropriate communication. For developing cultural competence and providing wide-range health care to a multi-cultural patient population, the most important component is the quality of communication. Effective communication has been linked to reducing health imbalances and improving patient outcomes (Sherrill & Mayo, 2014).

Literature reviewThe more we develop awareness of our own behavioral preferences and consider our reactions to behaviors which challenge those preferences, the greater our understanding will be of the role of culture in communication, and the less likely we are to feel irritated or frustrated when we encounter differences. Teaching strategies should concentrate the critical role of good communication skills particularly with different cultural groups. The positive attitudes towards communication skills training are significantly related to confidence when communicating with the patients.

It is important that instructors identify opportunities to teach improved communication skills (plack, 2006). Educational programs can provide students with an impact of communication on patient satisfaction and health outcomes. The health care professionals should provide treatment regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, social status, weight, sexual orientation,

religion and language of any patient or their family member (Committee on cultural competence, 2008). During interactions with clients, families and colleagues, physical therapists must consider the impact of culture and language they encounter to provide competent care to the patients. Any patient who presents with a language barrier or any communication needs must be provided with competent language assistance, both verbally and in writing to meet their needs.

When the patient and the therapist are from different cultural backgrounds, an understanding of the patient and family values is required to provide effective care. (Hayward, 2012). The skill of effective communication with the patients and their care takers is not specific to physical therapy community but is very essential in other sectors of health care profession.

A research conducted by Arif et al. (2017) on pharmacy students showed an increase in understanding of attitudes towards cross-cultural communication by pre-lecture and post-workshop assessment. Understanding of cross-cultural communication concepts and comfort level with providing cultural care has been increased significantly. They included a real- life scenario in which the learners can observe the actions of the video actors, reflect on the weaknesses and strengths of the interaction, and project how they would behave and respond if facing a similar patient interaction. The results of the study should be considered to develop patient-therapist interaction.

Summary Communication skills are very important for patient care management especially when dealing with patients of different cultural background. There are different ways of becoming culturally competent such as learning from a lecture, learning from an experience, being confident and <https://assignbuster.com/the-paruchuri-introduction-cultural-competence-is-a/>

expressing views in verbal and non-verbal ways of communication to provide effective care to the patients from different cultural backgrounds.

Each health care professional should learn the beliefs, attitudes, and values of the profession by professional communication and inter-personal skills.

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