

Communication in health care essay sample

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Communication is critical in health care to both providers and patients. Effective communication can save people's lives and help to make a provider more successful in their practice. The essential elements in communication apply to both basic communication and communication within health care. However, there are additional components needed to effectively communicate in health care such as preparedness, friendliness and sensitivit. Providers can inspire confidence in patients that may be reluctant to communicate and help them to communicate openly by developing a patient-centered approach. A patient-centered approach will also assist in dealing with cultural differences more successfully in the health care environment. Patient-centered care creates a partnership among the providers, their patients and their families and incorporates the patients' cultural beliefs and practices. Elements of Communication

The basic elements of communication include the sender, the message, channel and feedback and the receiver (Cheesebro, O'Connor, & Rios, 2010). The first component, the sender, is a combination of both the sender and the receiver in verbal communication. A person sends and receives messages at the same time. As you are speaking to someone, you are getting nonverbal cues from the receiver, which allows you to act as a transceiver by both sending and receiving messages. Sending messages involves putting your thoughts into words or gestures that the receiver can understand. This process is called encoding. Once the message is received, the receiver will put meaning to what was received; this is called decoding. Assumptions are made during decoding as it happens quickly. Each has a unique response as

experiences, feelings, gender, occupation, religion, values and mood are incorporated into the reaction.

The message is what is being communicated and can be a thought, idea, opinion or feeling. Nonverbal cues may be included in the delivery of the message that help convey a thought or feeling. The channel is the way messages travel from the sender to the receiver. Channels primarily include sound and light waves, but can also include sensors. The receiver's response to the message is known as feedback. Feedback indicates how the message was received and understood and can also indicate how the receiver feels about the message and the sender. Health Care Communication

The basic elements of effective communication do not necessarily differ from the basic rules of health care communication, but health care communication requires additional components to achieve successful communications. One of the important elements of health care communication is to prepare and understand what to expect of the patient before meeting with them. It is also important to follow up with the patient following the visit to ensure shared understanding has taken place and answer any questions the patient may have. Another important element is being friendly and open in patient interactions.

It is not only important for the health care providers to be friendly but also for those that work for him. Providing a relaxing and friendly environment helps reduce the stress of the patient and less stress often leads to better communication. One additional element is sensitivity. Being sensitive to the

patients feelings and responding with feeling will enhance communication greatly. Reluctant Patients

It is not unusual to have patients that are nervous and scared when seeing their health care providers. When patients are nervous or scared, they can be reluctant to share important information with their doctor. It is important for health care providers to put the patients at ease so they feel comfortable sharing information needed for diagnosis. One of the methods used is called the BATHE model. BATHE provides an outline of questions that elicit the needed information from the patient and helps the provider ask the questions in an appropriate manner. The B is for background; what is going on in the patients life. A is for affect and asks the question of how they feel about what is going on. T is for troubling and asks what about the situation is troubling the patient the most. H is for handling and asks the patient how they are handling the thing that is troubling them. E is for empathy and sharing with the patient how this must be difficult for them. If this model is followed successfully, the patients will feel more at ease and listened to and will help them communicate openly with their provider. Cultural Differences

Cultural differences can also create communication issues between providers and patients. Expecting providers and their staff to understand the aspects of multiple cultures is not practical. Creating a patient-centered care approach will help bridge the gap by treating each patient as an individual, taking into account their cultural beliefs and practices by creating a partnership. The partnership includes the patient, their family and the provider and involves everyone in decision making, understanding the patients preferences and including the patient's input into the plan of care. "

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Patient centeredness is furthered when patients receive information in their language, when health care providers have greater awareness of potential communication difficulties, and care is provided by taking into account the context of the patients cultural beliefs and practices” (Markova and Broome, 2007). Conclusion

To conclude, effective communication is key to successful patient care. Health care communication utilizes specific elements beyond the basic elements of communication such as preparing for and understanding the goals of the patient prior to meeting with them, being friendly and open with the patient and being sensitive to the patients feelings. Doing these things and incorporating a patient-centered care approach will help to ensure the broader patient population needs will be addressed. Focusing on the patients individual requirements and being inclusive of their cultural needs will help to ensure effective communication is taking place.

References

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