

Communication theories: a boost or a burden to a hospital? essay sample



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Introduction

Even as the development of science and technology has elevated the medical science to a state-of-the-art level and ramified the range of health service to huge number, one ancient humane factor still works as the life force of this vital social organ, whose name is “ effective communication”. Many might argue that implementation of communication theories in a hospital would be too much a deviation from its nature of job. Yet, one cannot deny the fact that without effective communication, any movement through the complex alley of medical service is virtually impossible, because, even a little nod or a single ‘ yes’ or ‘ no’ at any level of communication can save or end a patient’s life! Thus this essay intends to explore the possibility of applying a communication theory in the hospital where its writer works, besides evaluating the state of communication in the hospital before reaching a conclusion.

Expectancy Value Theory

Founded by Martin Fishbein in the 1970-s, this theory suggests that people “ mould themselves to the world in accordance with their expectations/beliefs and evaluations”. This theory is very useful to explain social behaviors, achievement motivation and work motivation. (Expectancy, 2004)

This theory suggests that behavior or behavioral intentions or attitudes evolve out of expectancy and evaluation, where the expectancy is an idea about a situation or object and evaluation is one’s estimation about the impact of that idea/situation/object on any plane.

Why This Theory is Important to Hospital

If the entire team of a hospital can adopt a vision in the light of the Expectancy Value Theory, where they would 'expect' that healthcare is a 24/7 and emergency service to the society and there would be tremendous negative impact on the society (evaluation) if the hospital fails to provide that service. Once armed with this vision, the following areas of communication would definitely take a new turn as the outcome of reorientation of one's approach to the world.

Intrapersonal communication: Here the evaluation system would work on a positive plane, like "I'm attached to an important organ of the society and thus I have more responsibility to meet its expectations"

Communication with clients: There will be more patience and interest in communication with the clients;

Team Communication: There would be less conflict of ego or other minor areas of personal interests, as the greater cause will influence all members to align their approach towards the perceived goal (achieving high standards of service).

In my hospital, such an alignment of vision is yet to be achieved and thus this theory can be utilized by creating a set of 'model statements' like 'We are Extraordinary as We Serve 24/7' or "We take care of the heart of society and we cannot hurt it", and then displaying them at common joints, besides explaining the rationale behind such an act.

Group Communication Problems

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The multicultural set up of our hospital at times create channel noises[1], yet that never poses a crisis in the main proceedings, because each members of the hospital has sufficient knowledge base to understand the basic expressions of fellow co-workers. Yet, real problem arrives when a caregiver of a particular cultural base has to handle a patient belonging to another culture. In these cases, appropriate measure is taken by providing someone close to patient's cultural base.

Another problem arises when it involves different cultural origin between a manager and a staff working under her. In this case, both suffer from lack of understanding and that influences the proceedings too. However, such placements have lately been identified and appropriate steps are underway.

Gender Issues

Fortunately this issue hasn't yet surfaced in our organization, as the knowledge base and background of the staff here are capable enough to rise to a gender-free behavior, which has greatly contributed to our team-building.

Team Communication

Fortunately, the team communication in our organization is pretty good; where it is mandatory for every team member to be present whenever a decision is made or a decision that is at hand. Information is equally shared regarding any project and that provides a sense of power among the members, as everyone usually gets the goal clearly defined.

Another important aspect of team communication is also maintained in our organization, and that is feedback system. Though we are encouraged to suggest at any level of planning and formulation of a project, we have options to oppose it on a logical ground. This open-minded ambience helps us to air care and share our views and that bonds us together as a team (Sookman, 2008).

In all the basic three ways to effective team communication is practiced in our organization, where we follow the principles as stated below:

1. We don't make assumptions. We don't take anything for granted or get moved by a pre-conceived idea. Because we know that this is hospital and it deals with delicate situations.
2. We confirm our understanding. This is important here, as any deformity in a message can culminate into a tragedy here. Thus we check and recheck every message, especially it involves a patient or any vital instruction
3. We appreciate one another for one's contribution at every level of operation. This we know is very much needed in the odd hours of our jobs, when one is at the limit of fatigue. This little token of recognition works wonders in our lives.

Altogether this approach has greatly helped our organization to create and maintain the " team structure" (Sookman, 2008), which is providing us the spirit to meet the challenges of healthcare service, 24/7.

Conclusion

In all, team communication or group communication is very vital in an organization like hospital, and for that matter application of certain theories would work wonders to enhance the overall performance, as for example, Expectancy Value Theory could consolidate the morale of our employees if its essence can be imbibed in us. Thus, communication theories are not a burden for a hospital, but blessings.

References

“ Expectancy Value Theory”. Web document. Retrieved 29 Feb. 2008, from http://www.tcw.utwente.nl/theorieenoverzicht/Theory%20clusters/Public%20Relations%2C%20Advertising%2C%20Marketing%20and%20Consumer%20Behavior/Expectancy_Value_Theory.doc/

Sookman, C (2008). “ Team Building: 3 Ways to effective team communication”. Web article. Retrieved 29 Feb. 2008, from http://www.sideroad.com/Team_Building/effective_communication.html

[1] Difficulty in understanding the message