

What is Interpersonal Skills and Communication?

- One of the six defined competencies as described by the ACGME
- This has to be incorporated, taught and measured in all resident training programs
- This is not just a “touchy-feely” attribute
- How we communicate AND listen to others

Interpersonal skills and communication

- Effective information exchange
 - Written notes
 - Oral presentations
 - Patient care discussions
- Effective teaming with other providers, patients AND families

Communication

- Medical communication is a complex task
- Must deal with emotional and rational behaviors
- Must deal with relational messages which can be non-verbal
- Sometimes the patient is the problem
 - Lack of understanding no matter how hard you try!

Interpersonal skills and communication

Interview

- Patient-centered questioning
- Take a values and beliefs history
- Consider social and spiritual values
- Addressing patients requests even though they do not coincide with your own care plan

- Responding to unfamiliar cultural differences of patient and family

Interpersonal skills and communication Interview

- Utilize an interpreter
- Locate a patient of similar culture to talk with
- Working with the difficult patient
- Dealing with the non-compliant and angry patient

Interpersonal skills and communication Contractual Elements

- Understanding the elements of informed consent and assent
- Determine if the patient is able to understand
- Negotiating a treatment plan
- Open communication

Interpersonal skills and communication Professionalism

- Truthful (professionalism!)
- Communicating bad news
- Disclosing errors and adverse outcomes
- Understanding empathy

Interpersonal skills and communication

- Communicating across disciplines
- Resolving conflicts

- Negotiating work load
- Turfig
- Seeking assistance
- Disclose mistakes

Interpersonal skills and communication Patients perspective

- Open ended questions
- Explained things clearly
- Sensing feelings
- Opportunity to express feelings
- Time to ask questions
- Opportunity to call back later

Interpersonal skills and communication Patients perspective

- Non-judgmental
- Empathic
- Confidence
- Clear explanation and arrangement of follow-up care
- Took part in the planning

How do we achieve it?

- CLASS (Buckman 1992)
 - C- context, which is our non- communicative relationship. This includes eye contact, privacy and adequate time
 - L- listen! Ask questions, but also recognize the

patients concerns

- A- acknowledgment . Recognizing and understanding the patients concerns and emotions, even if they are not important to us

CLASS

- S- strategy for treatment plan that incorporates the patients wishes
- S- summary of common goals and expectations

Calgary-Cambridge Observation

- Good initial contact
- Gather medical information and inventory the patients concerns
- Build a good relationship. The patient must understand what the important issues are AND we must understand their concerns
- Explanation and planning
- Summary

What is effective?

- Present the most important information as early as possible, even if it is bad news
- Present the most important issues of concern to us
- Must address issues important to the patient REGARDLESS of how they relate to us

What is Effective?

- Ensure that there is adequate and uninterrupted time to have a meaningful discussion
- Plan a follow-up to recap the plan and resolve

any remaining issues or decisions, ESPECIALLY those of the patient.

Why is this important

- We have to build relationships
 - Other MD's
 - Nurses
 - Support staff
 - Better patient care and referrals
 - Residents
 - Role model
 - Do not want to perpetuate old problems like turf wars
 - Make them better doctors

Why Is This Important

- Patients
 - They become partners in their care
 - Studies show that better communication leads to fewer legal suits
 - Levenson WW, J Am. Med. Assoc. 1994
- Professionalism

Summary

- Important to be honest and respectful
- Comprehensive interview including patients beliefs and values
- Dealing with cultural and social diversity
- Dealing with the problem patient
- Understanding the elements of informed consent
- Open discussion and conflict resolution