Interpersonal Skills and Effective Communication

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Objectives

• Develop communication skills needed to successfully and professionally interact with patients, employer, and co-workers
• Explain the components of effective communication
• Explain how a patient’s behavioral style influences the communication process
• Describe common barriers to effective communication

Objectives

• Consider patient characteristics such as age, personality, personal circumstances, etc. in developing your communication skills
• Employ interpersonal and communication skills in building patient trust and rapport
• Identify ways to resolve conflict through effective communication

Communication

• Defined: a process between at least 2 people beginning with one person’s desire to convey some information to another. Giving or exchanging information by talking, gesturing, or writing.
• Types: - what are some examples of each?
  • Verbal
  • Nonverbal
  • Mass
  • Media
• Catalyst for relationships – used to establish and enhance both personal and professional relationships

Communication

• Dynamic/Continuous – flow instantaneously btw sender and receiver
• Involves a vast range of elements
  • Sounds
  • Words
  • Pictures
  • Gestures
• Requires constant monitoring
  • Ensures correct message is being received

Key Elements of Communication

• Listening
• Observing
• Attending
• Understanding behavioral styles
  • Director
  • Socializer
  • Relator
  • Thinker
Nature of Communication

- Inevitable
- Irreversible
- Conducted on several levels
- Influenced by physical setting

Types of Communication

- Mass Communication
- Media Communication
- Verbal
- Nonverbal

Communication Process

- Sending and receiving messages
  - Verbal
  - Non-verbal - 90%
  - Written
- Questioning
- Listening
- Feedback

Verbal Communication

- Using words - spoken or written
- Language we use
  - Adult vs child vs teen vs geriatric
- Jargon - unique terminology to a specific group of people
- Why is it important to translate professional "jargon" into terms a patient can understand?

Non-Verbal Communication

- Body language
- Facial Expression
- Eye Contact
- Voice Tone (Vocalics)
- Touch
- Appearance
- Personal Space (4 zones)

Re-phrase these statements...

- I don’t know.
- We can’t do that.
- This will only hurt a little.
- I really dug at that calculus.
- You may need to get that tooth pulled.
- You have multiple carious lesions.
Written Communication

• Grammar
• Neatness
• Completeness
• Accuracy

• What are some examples of important written communication in the dental office?

Questioning

• Indicates interest

• Open-ended questions
  • More than just yes/no answer
  • How, why, etc.

• Closed-ended questions
  • Specific information needed
  • Yes/no

Active/Effective Listening

• Focus, show interest
• Eye-contact
• Observe verbal and non-verbal cues
• Be quiet, don’t interrupt
• Re-phrase after speaker finishes

Feedback

• Consider needs of others
• Avoid Jargon
• Constructive
• Be Specific
• Non-judgemental
• Motivational
• “I” statements

Barriers of Communication

• Cultural
• Interpersonal
• Attitude
• Physical
• Physiological
• Psychological
• Insufficient Knowledge

• Lack of Access to Knowledge
• Lack of interest
• Information overload
• Poor Communication Skills

Question

• How do you feel about communicating with a patient who is blind or deaf?

• What are some things you might do in these situations?
Skills Necessary for Positive Relationships

- Empathy
- Respect
- Warmth
- Direct/Concreteness
- Be Genuine
- Self-Disclosure

Patient Communication

- Core clinical skill
  - interviewing to obtain medical history
  - explaining diagnosis and prognosis
  - giving instructions and information needed for informed consent
  - providing counseling to motivate participation in therapy

Effective Patient Communication

- Requires understanding
  - Personality and behavior types
  - Learning styles
  - Patient motivators
  - Dental IQ
  - Stages of behavior change
  - Human needs

Motivation

- What motivates the patient?
- What is meaningful to the patient?
- Consider
  - perceived needs
  - observed needs
  - personality

Achieving Rapport

- Definition
- Listen
- Read/Display nonverbal cues correctly
- Appropriate language
- Empathy
- Cultural Sensitivity
- Self Disclosure

Patient-Centered Focus

- Respectful, non-threatening
- Pay attention to patient
  - Verbal/non-verbal cues
- Interest in patient values
- Encourage patient to express concerns
- Include patient in decision-making process
Communicating with Diverse Groups

• Elderly
• Caregiver
• People with a physical or mental disability

Conflict Resolution

• Inquire (Listen and HEAR what others are saying)
• Empathize (use “I” statements)
• Cool off/ Ask Permission
• Explain or Offer Choices

Role Play

• Divide into groups of 3
  • Patient, hygienist, evaluator

• Select scenario

• Role play patient education for scenario

• Exchange scenarios until everyone has had a chance to be the “hygienist”

References

• Wilkins, Esther M., Clinical Practice of the Dental Hygienist, 11th Ed. 24-35
• Mosby’s Dental Hygiene Concepts, Case and Competencies, 2nd Ed., 62-67

References