What Patients *Really* Want

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“I’ll Tell you What I Want….What I Really, Really Want…”

• Spice Girls, 1996
Objectives

• Discuss the impact of stress on patients and family members
• Discuss the presence of suffering in healthcare
• Verbalize strategies for displaying empathy in stressful or difficult situations
• Articulate the value of connection and demonstrate ways to connect in 60 seconds or less
• Describe the 3 components of trust and their importance in patient and family interactions
STRESS

STRESS EVERYWHERE
Milk does a body good, stress does not.
Pre-Stressed State

• Patients and families come to us “Pre-Stressed”
• Patients (And family members) who are less stressed are more cooperative
• Strong communication can help!
  – Beware of unmet needs
• “People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”
  -George Farha
Suffering

- Two types:
  - Inherent
  - Avoidable
Inherent Suffering

- Includes factors that accompany illness and treatment
  - Anxiety
  - Fear
  - Discomfort/Pain
  - Worry
  - Stress
  - Loss of identity
Avoidable Suffering

- Refers to suffering that arises from dysfunction in the health care system
  - Delay in response (Calls, emails, call lights, pain, etc.)
  - Wait times
  - Perceived lack of courtesy/respect
  - Inconvenience
  - Absence of information
  - Safety concerns
What Can Be Done?

• In response to inherent suffering?
  – Manage Pain
  – Optimize safety
  – Personalize care
  – Reduce fear and anxiety
  – Protect privacy
  – Include patient/family in care decisions
  – Demonstrate empathy
  – Prepare patient for, and keep patient/family informed during procedures
What Can Be Done?

• In response to *avoidable* suffering?
  – Optimize teamwork
  – Deliver care with courtesy
  – Be helpful
  – Avoid unnecessary waits
  – Make processes easier and more efficient
  – Promote a quiet, clean environment
  – Secure adequate amenities
  – Service recovery
Why is Empathy Important?

• Empathy is associated with:
  – Better health outcomes
  – Higher patient satisfaction
  – Patient empowerment
• Patients who experience empathy feel safer and less stressed
• Remember: *Patients (and family) who are less stressed are more cooperative!*
Empathy

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Evwgu369Jw
Connection

“Connection is the energy that is created between people when they feel seen, heard and valued—when they can give and receive without judgment.”

— BRENÉ BROWN, PHD, LMSW
Value of Connection

• Feeling of caring
• Feeling of safety
• Comfort in sharing ideas, thoughts, asking questions
• Reduced stress, which leads to improved cooperation
How Do You Connect With Others?

• Sit Down
• Show Interest
• Ask Questions
• Provide Feedback
• Include Family
• Remember Details
• Focus on the person, not the illness/issue
Becky’s Top Ten List:

• Kids
• Grandkids
• Pets
• Hobbies
• Food
• Hometown
• College
• Sports
• Pending events
• Travel
Reassurance is Golden

So far you’ve survived 100 percent of your worst days. You’re doing great.
When people trust you, they tend to see the best in you. When they don’t trust you, they tend to see the worst.

Nicholas Boothman
Trust: The 3 Ingredients

- Authenticity
- Rigor in Logic
- Empathy
Authenticity

- Transparency
- Genuine
- Matching your outer expression with your inner experience
Rigor in Your Logic

- Ask questions
- Answer questions
- Provide supportive evidence
- Provide resources
- Don’t be afraid to say “I don’t know”
Difficult Situations

“When you come to the end of your rope, tie a knot and hang on.”

— Franklin D. Roosevelt
Common Difficulties

- Long Waits
- Courtesy and Respect (or perceived lack thereof)
- Lack of responsiveness
- Poor explanation
What do patients *really* want?

....to feel like they aren’t a patient.....
Being an adult is the dumbest thing I have ever done.