

Getting Past Stuck Points: Communication Tools to Help Remove Barriers

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In Our Time Together We Will....

- Discuss how listening is a powerful tool and helps to create a framework for communication skills
 - Highlight common communication challenges
 - Propose alternative ways of approaching communication challenges
- 

Before We Get Started

Dispelling a myth:

You either have ~~it~~ or you don't....



Stuck Points During a Visit

- Jumping in too soon
- Pushing forward with our agenda
- Not expressing empathy
 - Missed opportunities
 - Giving information
 - Moving past strong emotion
- Change talk (No....., Yes, but...)



Jumping in Too Soon

- “I am not the type of person to complain”
- “Nothing seems to be easy anymore”
- “I’ve just had a lot on my plate lately”
- *“When did the chest pain start?”*
- *“When did you get discharged from rehab?”*
- *“How is the new medication working out?”*



W.A.I.T.

- Why
- Am
- I
- Talking?



Us as Broadcasters

- Simple questions to ask ourselves:
 - How much of the time am I transmitting?
 - How much of the time am I receiving?
 - What changes if I spend more time receiving?





How to Listen Effectively



- Expand the amount of information you can absorb
- Listen for 3 elements: facts, feelings, intention
- Quickly assess the value of the information
- Provide feedback that you are understanding and following

Listening Skills

DO

- Pay attention: watch & listen
- Strive to understand as accurately as possible
- Reflect what you are hearing
- Notice emotion
- Express empathy when appropriate

DON'T

- Interrupt
- Redirect the conversation
- Plan your response
- Let your mind wander



Questions to Elicit the Story

- How is the illness affecting you? What is the impact on your daily life?
- What ideas do you have about what is going on?
- What are you hoping for?
- What worries you the most?



How to Save Time up Front



A Common Disconnect



The diagram consists of two circles, one on the left and one on the right, each containing text. The left circle is labeled 'Healthcare Agenda' and the right circle is labeled 'Patient Agenda'. The circles are positioned horizontally apart from each other, with no connecting lines or arrows between them, visually representing a disconnect. The background is a solid dark blue color.

**Healthcare
Agenda**

**Patient
Agenda**

Bridging the Gap

Prioritize:

“Wow you are dealing with a lot.

What worries you the most?”

“What is most important to you?”

“I wish we had time to cover everything. What are your top two concerns?”

“I also want to address your blood pressure and how we can better manage it”



Elicit agenda:

“I’d like to get a list of your concerns”

“What are you hoping to cover today?”

“What is on your list?”

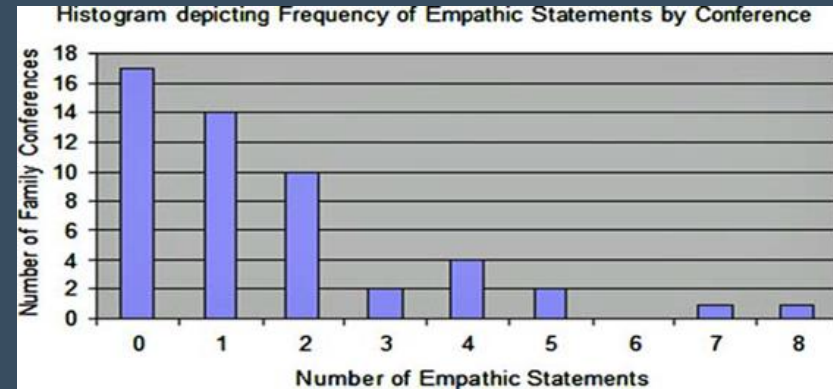
Followed by

“What else?”

“You need to be
more
EMPATHIC”

Why is Empathy So Important?

- We are not saying enough empathic statements



- We know when emotion is present
 - And can often interpret the emotion
 - ...but use information or reassurance to address it

We have good intentions...they just don't land well



Our Tendency is to Give Information

- “I feel like everyone is giving up on me”
 - *‘We have tried four different medications’*
 - *‘It would be awful to feel that way’*
- “I don’t understand – why can’t I just get the lung transplant?”
 - *‘Unfortunately experience tells us you would do worse’*
 - *‘You are having a hard time processing this devastating news’*

What Realm is the Patient In?



Emotional



Cognitive

Empathic Statements Defined

- A statement that acknowledges the emotion of another person
- NOT
- A statement that acknowledges the emotion of another person followed by “but”
- And NOT “I understand”
- And NOT easing anxiety with medical info

Empathy is More Than Words



And Words Matter



Demonstrate Empathy Verbally Using 'SAVE'



Demonstrate Empathy VERBALLY

- SUPPORTIVE statements:
 - *“Our team is here when questions arise.”*
 - *“We’ll walk through this together.”*
 - *“Know that our team is here to help you.”*
- NOT...“Know that our team is here to help you BUT I’m sure you’ll be fine.”
- “Well, the test results show that your numbers haven’t changed.”

Demonstrate Empathy VERBALLY

- ACKNOWLEDGE:
 - *“You should be proud!”*
 - *“You’ve done everything right, so of course you’re disappointed.”*
 - *“If you weren’t hesitant, I’d be worried.”*
 - NOT “You’ve done everything right, so of course you’re disappointed BUT remember we talked about this as a possibility.”
 - “I completely understand what you’re going through.”

Demonstrate Empathy VERBALLY

- VALIDATE:
 - *“Most patients are nervous when they are leaving the hospital after having been here so long.”*
 - *“It’s heart-breaking to go through all of this. I wish things were different.”*
 - *“This is a very painful situation.”*
 - *“I can’t imagine how difficult this must be to hear.”*
 - NOT “This is a very painful situation BUT at least...”
 - “Even though we’re not sure what’s wrong with you, at least we know it’s not...”
 - “We’ve given you a lot of pain medication, so shouldn’t still be in pain.”

Demonstrate Empathy VERBALLY

- EMOTION NAMING:
 - *“You seem worried.”*
 - *“This must seem overwhelming.”*
 - NOT “Don’t worry. You’ll be fine.”
 - “I understand what you’re going through.”
 - “I hear you.”

Collaborate: Paired Conversations

- Pair up. Talk for 1 minute, alternating back and forth, while discussing your favorite dessert. Every sentence after the first should start with “Yes, but”
- Second round: alternate back and forth, while discussing sports. Every sentence after the first should start with “No”

Collaborate: Paired Conversations

- Final round: alternate back and forth, while discussing your favorite vacation spot. Every sentence after the first should start with “Yes, and”

Creating a Counter-argument

- No...

“I need antibiotics to get over this cold. Nothing else works”

“No, this is a viral infection – antibiotics won’t work”

Creating a Counter-argument

- No...

- Yes, but...

“I just can’t see myself taking a medication three times a day”

“Yes, but this is the medication that will work the best”

When we hear “Yes, but” or “No”



Utilize Paired Conversations When Discussing Treatment Plans

“I need antibiotics to get over this cold – nothing else works”

“Many of my patients feel this way and are surprised to hear antibiotics won’t help when it is a viral infection”



- No....
- Yes, but....
- ‘I appreciate that because...’

“I just can’t see myself taking medication three times a day”

“I appreciate that because I wouldn’t want to take a medication three times a day and we know it is the best option”

- No....
- Yes, but....
- ‘I appreciate that because...’
- Reflect back and Wait



Getting Past Stuck Points

- Spend more time receiving
 - Use your levels of listening
 - Wait for the wide open window, solutions should come after the story
- Collaborate on agenda setting (*what else?*)
- Address emotions
 - Use empathic statements
- Find the underlying story, not a counter-argument
 - Reflect back and wait instead of “Yes, but...”



Your
comfort
zone



