

Secret Tip on how to talk to physicians and fellow employees to really help our patients: Use SBAR

All of us at one point have experienced frustration while talking to a physician or a fellow worker about a patient care issue. Have you gotten the sense the person receiving the message was not really listening to you at all and had their own idea of what they wanted, regardless of your plan?

This is not an uncommon occurrence. In fact it happens on a regular basis each day but it doesn't have to any more. A simple communication method already exists and is being introduced throughout the Capital Service Area that helps physicians and staff to listen better, understand each other and work better together to help serve our patients.

What is the Communication Model?

The model is commonly known as SBAR or Situation, Background, Assessment and Recommendation and is designed to improve listening.

When do you use it?

SBAR can be utilized whenever you have a request of a physician or fellow worker.

How do you use it?

Say you are a health care worker and you want to get some help from a nurse or need a physician to provide guidance on a patient care issue. You know what you would like to recommend and you have all of the background information. Here is what you do:

State the SITUATION

Your situation should be described in one sentence. For example, "Dr. Smith, I have a patient of yours that is here on the wrong day for his appointment and would still like to be seen."

Give BACKGROUND information

State the details of the situation you have obtained by researching the problem.



For example:

The patient arrived today at 11 am.
His appointment is really for 11 tomorrow.
Patient comes from over 40 miles away.
Patient cannot drive a friend brought him.
Patient is willing to wait to be seen today.
I have looked at your appointments and you have several slots available.
I have looked at your hall partner's schedule and he has a few slots open also.

Give your ASSESSMENT

Assess the situation and tell the physician what you think should be done.

For example:

The patient is traveling from a long distance.
I don't know if it was our mistake or the patient.
I think we should see him today.

Give your RECOMMENDATION

A recommendation is where you advise the physician what your method would be for solving the problem. It may or may not be accepted by the physician but is a starting point to discuss solutions.

For example:

I think he should be seen at your afternoon appointment time.

Why does SBAR work?

- When you use this method, both you and the other person are on the same page to think through a problem.
- You are proactively giving the listener data that they would be requesting anyway if they were going to try to solve the problem.
- You save them time by researching options
- You keep them from having guess by giving them a recommendation.
- Doctors already know how to use this method. They use a similar method known as SOAP when they speak doctor to doctor about patient care issues.

So what are you waiting for? You can use SBAR right now and watch yourself become more productive and less frustrated as you communicate with others.

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