

# ENHANCE YOUR COMMUNICATION SKILLS

---

Tami Hagemeyer, ABOC  
[tamihagemeyer@gmail.com](mailto:tamihagemeyer@gmail.com)

*"Effective Teamwork Begins And Ends With Communication"*-Mike Krzyzowski, AZQuotes

Telephone etiquette is typically the first form of communication we have with our patients. It is the very first impression patients' have with our practice. Developing a pre-formed, or standard method of answering creates uniformity. Speaking with a smile sends a clear message to our patients' and will make any person we are conversing with, (in person or telephone), feel more comfortable.

Preparation for emergency calls is important. The triage communication between the caller and the team member will directly impact patient care. Developing an informational checklist will encourage clarity, and allow for comprehensive treatment.

Often silence is construed as a negative form of communication; when we choose to not respond, or are too busy to reply to a person who has attempted to communicate, will tell that person we made the decision to not interact with them, at this time.

Communication is permanent; we cannot reverse what is said. We have all said things we wish we could "take back," but we can't, it is irreversible; so take a deep breath, and give pause before speaking.

Listening is an essential form of communication. When we listen to respond, we are not giving the conversation our full attention, as we are concentrating on our own possible response. But when we listen first to the entirety of the statement, we understand the entire content, and eliminate most misinformation, or possible confusion.

Body language is a non-verbal form of communication. Daily we use body language; almost always without realizing it. Recognizing the message our own posture holds is an important tool, and an advantage to help us understand others' body language.

Frame styling presents an opportunity to communicate a positive interaction with our patients. Though our patients' appreciate honesty during frame styling, they will appreciate honesty with tact.

Patient's response is positive when the conversation revolves around their needs. Professional responses and recommendations are always appreciated, and may be necessary; occasionally our conversation may become personal... too personal, and we may interject ourselves directly. Allow a few seconds to pause, and consider the dialog will give us a chance to remain professional and continue to enhance our patient's experience.

Humor is a great communicator with our patients. It lightens the mood, and can be (when appropriate), extremely helpful for many situations.

Every person should be treated with equality; though we all understand some require more attention and conversation...often multiple conversations.

Complaints are a difficult form of communication that we all try to avoid. When faced with a complaint or if we ourselves have a complaint, negotiation will increase the chance for a compromise, and make most individuals involved feel happier with the outcome.

When an unplanned complaint occurs, it is often fueled with anger. It can be a difficult situation that requires tact and diplomacy. Some conversations may require research and can be better when angers have subsided. The best and most effective way of "handling" an angry patient is to let them understand we have listened, and they have been *heard*.

This is not a time to agree with them, but disagreeing can fuel the proverbial fire. Tactfully ask them to remain calm while we try to find an amicable solution to the situation.

When we have a difficult situation to communicate, a calculated conversation will give us the chance to think and plan a strategy for any unexpected circumstances that may arise.

When we continue to improve our communication skills, we increase our confidence and enhance patient experience.

---

#### Acknowledgements

thebusinesscommunication.com

tinybuda.com

forbesonline.com