

Customer Service and Effective Communication

Celeste Gray RN, MSN

Objectives

- Apply specific behavioral communication styles that contribute to collaboration and its association between outcomes, quality of care and satisfaction.
- Identify steps that can be taken to ensure customer satisfaction.



Today's Healthcare System

- Involve numerous interfaces and patient handoffs among multiple healthcare workers with various training and education levels
- During a 4 day hospital stay a patient may interact with up to 50 different employees

What does Ineffective Communication Cause?

- Creates situations where medical errors can occur
- These errors have the potential to cause severe injury or unexpected patient death





Definition of Communication

- The imparting or interchange of thoughts, opinions, or information by speech, writing, or signs
- 93% of communication is non-verbal which includes body language, attitude, and tone
- 7% are actual words said

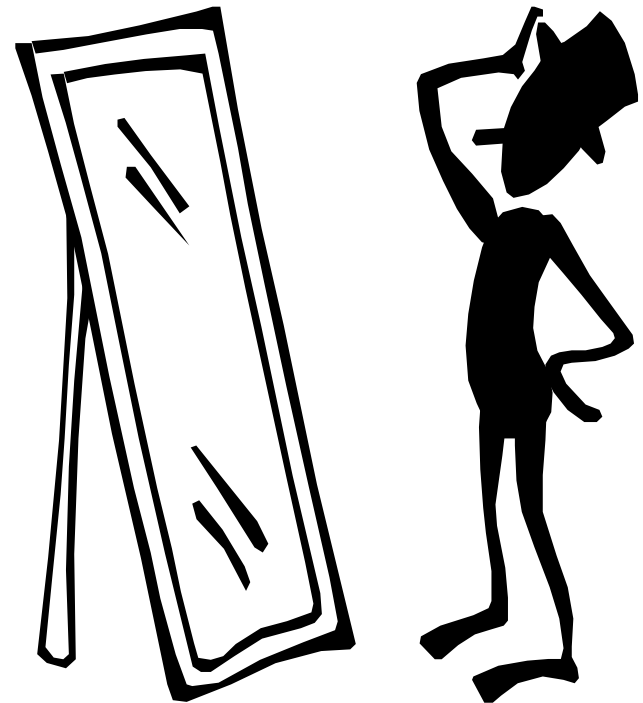
Communication Styles

- Aggressive
- Passive
- Assertive



Aggressive Style

- Mottos and beliefs
 - “Everyone should be like me”
 - “I am never wrong”
 - “I am right”



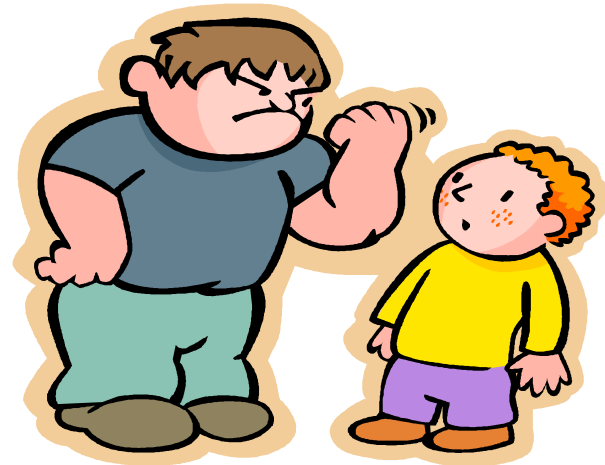
Aggressive Style Continued

- Communication style
 - Closed minded
 - Poor listener
 - Has difficulty seeing others points of view
 - Interrupts
 - Monopolizes the conversation



Aggressive Style Continued

- Characteristics
 - Achieves goals often at others expense
 - Domineering, bullying
 - Patronizing
 - Sarcastic



Aggressive Style Continued

- Behavior
 - Puts others down
 - Does not ever think they are wrong
 - Bossy
 - Overpowers, moves into others space
 - Pushes people around
 - Know-it-all attitude
 - Doesn't show appreciation

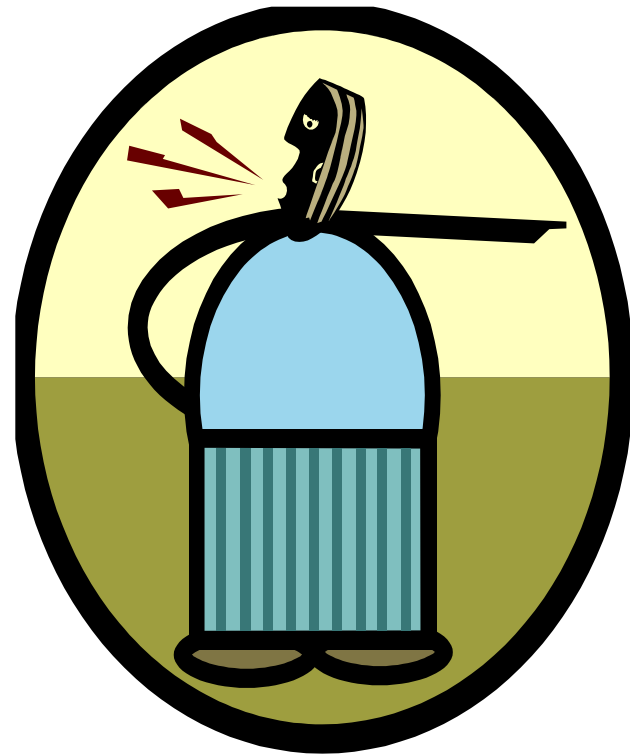
Aggressive Style Continued

- Nonverbal cues
 - Point finger
 - Frowns
 - Glares/stares
 - Loud tone
 - Rigid posture



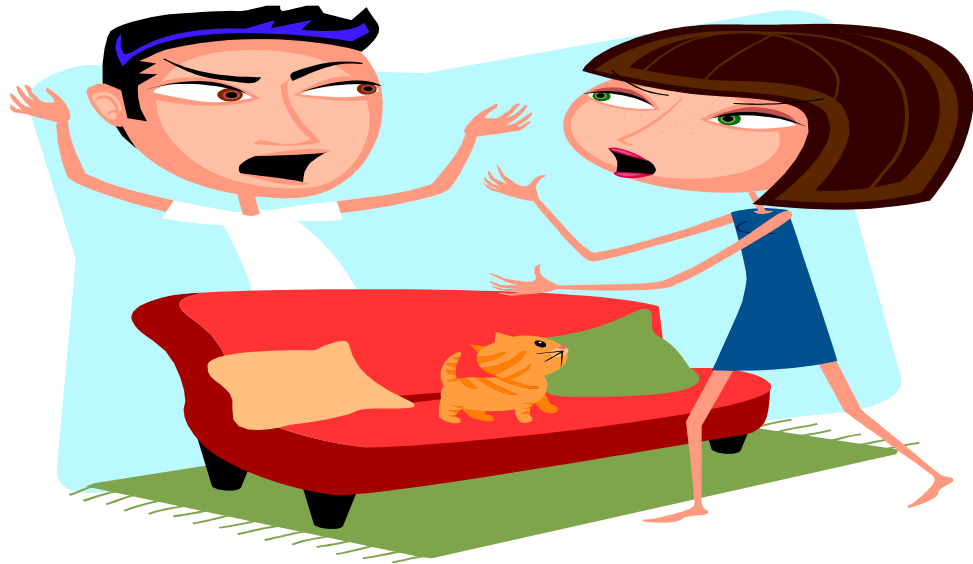
Aggressive Style Continued

- Verbal cues
 - “You must”
 - “Just do it”
 - Verbally abusive



Aggressive Style Continued

- Confrontation and problem solving
 - Must always win arguments
 - Operates from a win/lose paradigm



Passive Style

- Mottos and beliefs
 - “Don’t express your true feelings”
 - “Don’t make waves”
 - “Don’t disagree”
 - “Others have more rights than I do”

Passive Style Continued

- Communication style
 - Indirect
 - Always agrees
 - Doesn't speak up
 - Hesitant



Passive Style Continued

- Characteristics
 - Apologetic
 - Doesn't express own wants and feelings
 - Allows others to make decisions for them

SORRY!

Passive Style Continued

- Behaviors
 - Avoids conflict
 - Asks permission unnecessarily
 - Complains instead of taking action
 - Has difficulty implementing plans
 - Clams up

Passive Style Continued

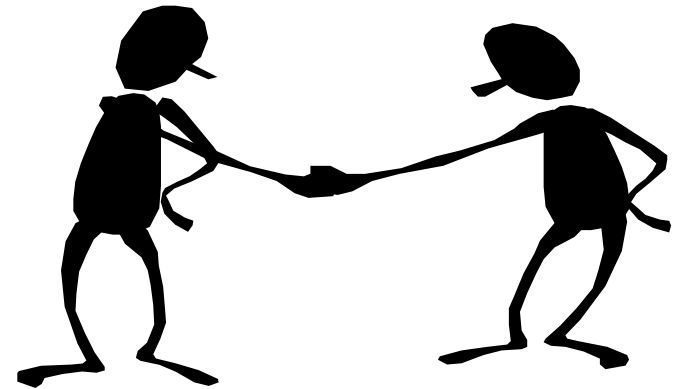
- Nonverbal cues
 - Fidgets
 - Nods head often and smiles
 - No eye contact
 - Low volume

Passive Style Continued

- Verbal cues
 - “You know better than me”
 - “I can’t”
 - “This will probably be wrong”
 - Monotone voice

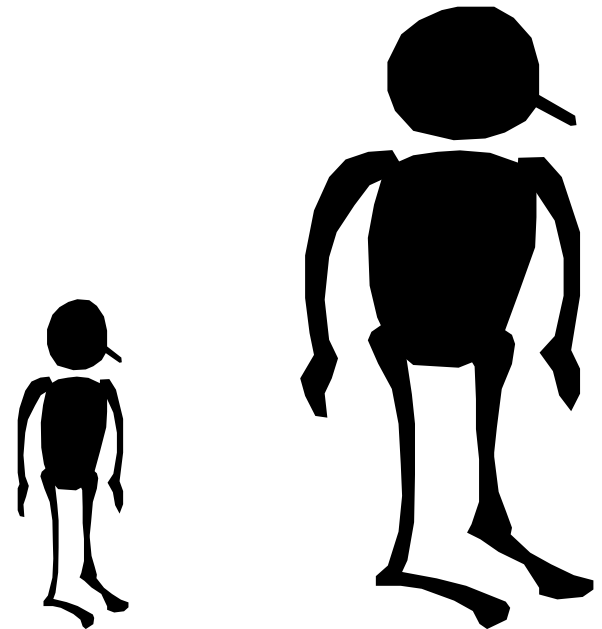
Passive Style Continued

- Confrontation and problem solving
 - Avoids, ignores, leaves, postpones
 - Withdraws
 - Spends too much time asking for advice or needing supervision
 - Agrees too often



Passive Style Continued

- Feelings felt
 - Powerlessness
 - Wonders why they do not receive credit for good work



Assertive Style

- Mottos and beliefs
 - Believes self and others are valuable
 - Knows that assertiveness does not mean you always win but you handle the situation as best as possible
 - “I have rights and so do others

Assertive Style Continued

- Communication style
 - Effective, active listener
 - States limits, expectations
 - Does not judge
 - Considers other's feelings



Assertive Style Continued

- Characteristics
 - Non-judgmental
 - Observes behavior
 - Trusts self and others
 - Self-aware
 - Open, flexible, versatile
 - Proactive
 - Decisive



Assertive Style Continued

- Behavior
 - Fair and consistent
 - Operates from choice
 - Knows what is needed and develops a plan to get there
 - Action oriented
 - Realistic in expectations
 - Consistent

Assertive Style Continued

- Nonverbal cues
 - Open and natural gestures
 - Attentive and interested facial expressions
 - Direct eye contact
 - Confident and relaxed
 - Vocal volume appropriate

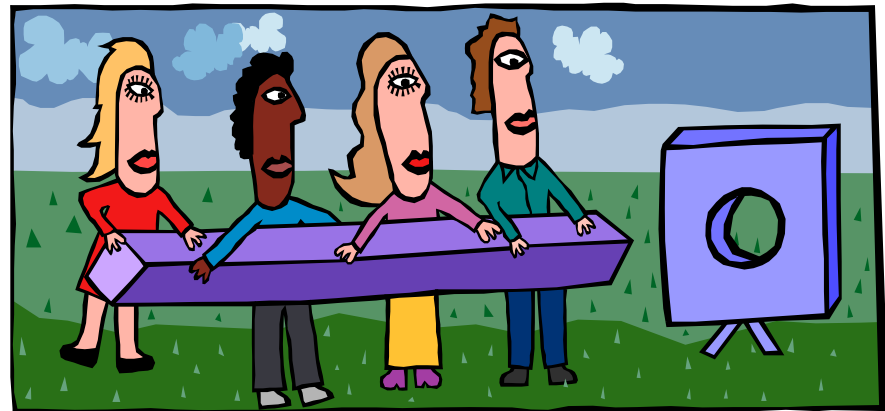
Assertive Style Continued

- Verbal cues
 - “I choose to” an “I” statement
 - “What are my options”



Assertive Style Continued

- Confrontation and problem solving
 - Negotiate, bargain, trade
 - Confronts problems as they happen
 - Does not let negative feelings build up



Assertive Style Continued

- Feelings
 - Enthusiastic
 - Well being
 - Even tempered
 - Positive



When Aggressive Style is Essential

- When a decision has to be made quickly
- During emergencies
- When you know you are right and that fact is crucial





When Passive Style is Essential

- When an issue is minor
- When the problem caused by conflict are greater than the conflict itself
- When emotions are running high and time is needed to gain and regain perspective
- When the other's position is impossible to change for all practical purposes (government policies)



Effective Communication

- Positive outcomes
- Improved information flow
- More effective interventions
- Improved safety
- Enhanced employee morale
- Increased patient and family satisfaction
- Decreased length of stay
- Improved quality

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bTbHwnxCGal>



A Customer

- A “customer” is anyone for whom we provide goods or services...the target of our efforts and activities.
- Customers are all the people who depend on us



Two Main Types of Customers

- External customers
 - People outside your organization
 - Those who use and/or pay for the products and services your business provides
 - Without their business you have no business, no work, no salary
 - Making sure they are provided with the best service possible is critical to the organization's success

Types of Customers Continued

- Internal customers
 - Those within the organization
 - They can be in your department or other departments in the organization
 - Internal customers have needs and expectations and they deserve top-notch service as well

- “Organizations have more to fear from lack of internal customer service than from any level of external customer service.”

Ron Tillotson

Performance improvement author

Serving Internal Customers

- Do you see those who work beside you as your customer?
- Do you see those who work in other departments as your customers?
- Do you see them as individuals who depend on you to make them successful?

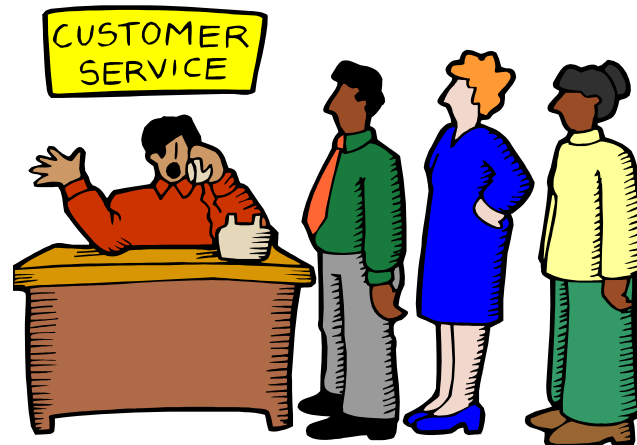


You Serve Others When You

- Provide exceptional customer service
- Demonstrate respect and empathy for every individual
- Tell people what they need to hear not what they want to hear
- Hold team members accountable for doing quality work
- Contribute to others success and well being
- Make sure everyone on the team does his or her share
- Keep everyone focused on the organizational mission
- Maintain a positive attitude
- Set the tone and example for everyone to follow
- Do what's right...what needs to be done- regardless of how difficult it may be
- Help team members learn, develop, grow, and achieve their personal goals
- Know the way and show the way

The “Sounds” of Service

- I apologize for the mistake.
Let me make it right.
- How can I make this job easier for you?
- I’m not sure, but I will find out.
- How can we do better next time?
- What can I do to help?
- Tell me what you need.
- I’m here for you.
- I’ll handle that.
- Thank you.
- Yes.





Do I Serve Others?

Self-Reflection Assessment

- Do I.....

Seize the opportunities to help others be successful?

Enrich the experiences, careers, and lives of those whom I impact?

Resist the temptation to think and act in “me first” ways?

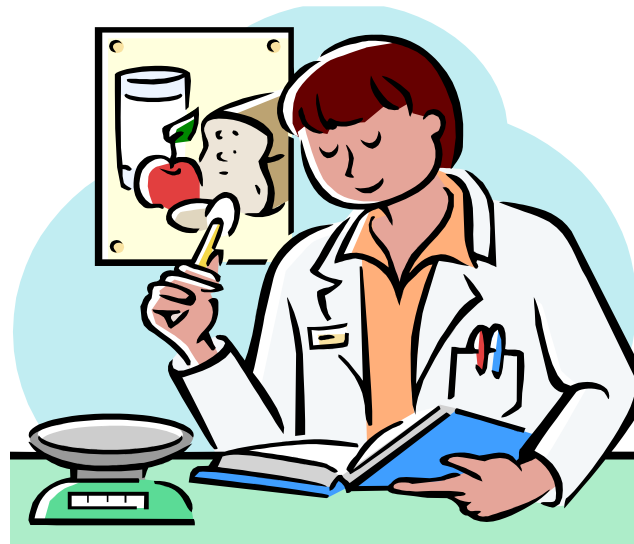
Volunteer my time and efforts for the betterment of others?

Extend a “helping hand” to those in need?

Customer Service Video

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z4FEeBN9-vQ>

- Case Study





Lessons Learned About Patient Satisfaction

- Meeting needs and exceeding patients' expectations is not easy
- As hospitals began to explore the topic of customer satisfaction experiences from other industries were studied
- Patient satisfaction is not a program...it is a change in philosophy
- In the minds of most patients, staff are all responsible for each other's behaviors and actions.

- “Be everywhere, do everything, and never fail to astonish a customer.”

Moto of Macy's Department Store

Drivers of Patient Satisfaction

- Patients want their healthcare providers to...
 - People to introduce themselves by name
 - Explain why they are in the room and what they are about to do
 - They want communication, information, and education
 - They want to know what is going on with their tests and what will happen next
 - They want to know which doctor is doing what
 - They want to feel like partners in their own care and plan of treatment
 - They want clarification if they hear conflicting bit of information from different caregivers

“Perception is real even when
it is not reality.”

Edward de Bono

Leadership author

Compounding Factors

- Caregivers become so accustomed to the routine
- Caregivers forget things may be new or foreign to the patient
- Caregivers need to take some time to explain everything—the environment, the daily schedule, who is doing what



Compounding Factors Continued

- Caregivers are too busy trying to do everything for all people that, to the patient, they don't appear to have the time to care or answer questions
- It is a good habit to pause before leaving the room with a smile, take a breath, and ask if there is anything else they need or do they have any questions



Compounding Factors Continued

- There are many healthcare providers going in and out of the room and patients thing they are communicating with one another when often they are not
- Caregivers can get blind sided with many questions from the patient when they really may not know who was in the room or what was the plan of care is



Compounding Factors Continued

- When other disciplines do something that is dissatisfying to a patient the patient's frustration is often vented on the next person that enters the room
- There are a few people who do not want to be satisfied
- There are patients who are always sweet, pleasant, optimistic and forgiving



Compounding Factors Continued

- The ideal approach to satisfying patients is to do it right the first time

“If you don’t have time to do it right the first time, when will you have the time to do it over.”

John Wooden
Basketball coach



Service Recovery

- Respond promptly
- Act in a calm, courteous, and professional manner
- Apologize
- Trust the patient and listen actively and attentively to their complaint
- Take on the problem
- If there is a barrier to fixing the problem, admit it

Your Role in Customer Satisfaction

- Meet the needs of every patient you encounter
- Meet the needs of every person giving care or service to you or the team of providers
- Act as a role model at all times
- Assess the level of every patient as you do rounds and follow-up if needed
- Ask every patient if there is something more you can do for him or her

Forbidden Phrases

- “You’ll have to....”
- “I’ll have to....”
- “I don’t know....”
- “We can’t do that....”
- “You misunderstood me....”
- “We are short staffed....”
- “Hang on a second, I’ll be back....”

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dvIMmiZNbyU&feature=related>



Quality Patient Care

- Healthcare is more competitive and businesslike.
- This change has caused the quality of patient care to improve
- Development of patient satisfaction surveys
Development of patient satisfaction surveys
- This has caused healthcare to be more aware of how we are perceived by patients



Public Reporting and Patient Satisfaction Scores

- The core mission of many hospitals
- HCAHPS
 - “Hospital Consumers Assessment of Healthcare Providers Services”
 - Developed by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)
 - Collects information on patient’s perspective of the care received in the hospital



Higher Patient Satisfaction Scores

- Leads to customer (patient) loyalty
- Improves patient retention
- They are less vulnerable to price wars
- Consistent profitability
- Increased staff morale with reduced staff turnover leads to increased productivity
- Reduced risk of malpractice lawsuits
- Accreditation issues
- Increased personal and professional satisfaction



Conclusion

- Patient satisfaction is an attitude
- Quality does not stand still
- Delivery of patient-focused care requires that care is delivered through collaboration and effective communication, not just sometimes or usually, but always
- Quality patient care must be with every patient

- Questions



References

- Covey, S.R. (1989). *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. Simon and Schuster: New York, NY.
- Dempsey, K.B. (2011). *SHED or You're Dead*. Trey Press: Phoenix, AZ.
- Hughes, RG. *Patient Safety and Quality: Evidenced Based Handbook for Nurses*. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (US). 2008 (Apr.).
- Leary, C. (2006). *Navigating the Path of Leadership*. Cathy Leary & Scott J. Allen: Cleveland, OH.
- Patterson, K. Grenny, J. McMillan, R., Switzler, A. *Crucial Conversation Tools for Talking When Stakes are High*. (US). 2012.
- Prakash, B. (2010). Patient satisfaction. *Journal of Cutaneous and Aesthetic Surgery* 3(3) 151-155.
- Sherman, R. *Understanding your communication styles* at www.au.af.mil/ar/auc/aucgate/sba/comm-style.htm.