

 **Hospital Quality Institute**
Leadership in quality and patient safety

 **Language of Caring**

**From Empathy to HCAHPS:
Tools for Reliably Caring Communication**

**Webinar
October 8, 2015
Noon – 1 pm**

Welcome and Housekeeping

- Dial-in for Audio:
- The webinar is being recorded.
- Chat



Agenda

- 1) California's HCAHPS performance
- 2) Empathy in the service of experience
- 3) Q & A



Presenters



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HQI

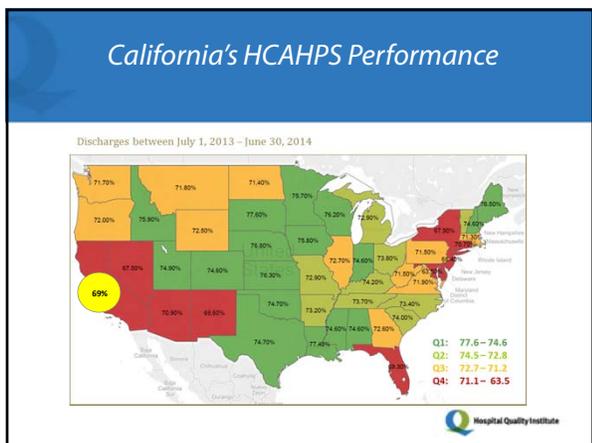
Advancing quality and patient safety in California

- Align, Harmonize, Simplify, Streamline
- Innovate
- Take excellence to scale for statewide impact
- Promote reliability
- www.hqinstitute.org



California Hospital Engagement Network
Working to reduce patient harm by 40 percent and readmissions by 20 percent by the end of 2015.





HCAHPS Star Ratings Visualization Tool for California

Data Visualization Tool for HCAHPS Star Ratings in California



Check it out!
<http://www.hqinstitute.org/post/data-visualization-tool-hcahps-star-ratings-california>

Hospital Quality Institute





**respect
reliability
resilience**

2015 Hospital Quality Institute Conference
California's Preeminent Quality and Patient Safety Conference

November 11-13, 2015
Sacramento, CA

Hospital Quality Institute
Advancing the Quality of Patient Care

World Café: Advancing Patient and Family Engagement in California November 12, 2015 from 1:30 PM – 5:00 PM

More info at:
<http://www.hqinstitute.org>

The World Café
Principles for hosting conversations that matter

Set the Context
Share Perspectives
Explore Connections
Synthesize



 Language of Caring

FROM EMPATHY TO HCAHPS



Dorothy Sisneros, MS, MBA
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 Language of Caring

- We partner with healthcare organizations to achieve an unparalleled patient experience and a culture of caring through exceptional communication.
- We offer 2 breakthrough skill-building strategies that elevate HCAHPS and CG-CAHPS scores.
 - *The Language of Caring for Staff*
 - *The Language of Caring for Physicians*

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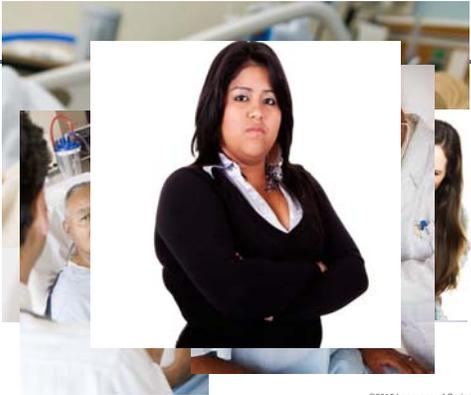
EMPATHIC COMMUNICATION

“An essential element of professional competence”

Institute of Medicine Report, 2001



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EVERY PATIENT HAS A STORY, AND....

every patient and family endure an avalanche of feelings during their healthcare experiences.

“Real care of the sick does not begin with costly procedures, but with the simple gifts of affection, love and concern.” *The Dalai Lama*



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EMPATHY

is the
HEART
of health care.



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AGENDA

- Defining empathy
- The case for empathy
- What gets in the way of empathy?
- Can you teach empathy?
- Empathic communication
 - The mindset
 - The skill set
- Strategies for strengthening empathy in your organization



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DEFINING EMPATHY

“In clinical medicine, empathy is the ability to understand the patient’s situation, perspective, and feelings and to communicate that understanding to the patient.”



J.L. Coulehan et.al
“Let Me See If I Have This Right...”: Words That Help Build Empathy--AN
INTERN MED; Aug. 7, 2001; 135:221-227



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**EMPATHY IN PATIENT CARE:
THREE ELEMENTS**

1. Reading and understanding the patient's inner experiences and perspective
2. *Communicating* that understanding by acknowledging and validating the person's feelings
3. The *intention to help*

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EMPATHY IS NOT SYMPATHY.

- A *sympathetic* caregiver feels the feeling the patient is feeling.
- Sympathy CAN contribute positively to the patient relationship, but some caregivers might not feel sympathy.
- **Good News:** A caregiver can express empathy even without feeling sympathy.

**Empathy is energy giving while
Sympathy is energy draining.**

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THE CHALLENGE:

To be able to relate to the inner world of another person while realizing that it is not your world.

I can support your anger without having to be angry.

I can support your sadness while I'm feeling generally happy.

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THE CASE FOR EMPATHY



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LACK OF EMPATHY IN OUR FAMILIES AND OUR WORLD

...causes conflict in our families, our partnerships, our work, our marriages, our political communities, our churches, and between nations



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EMPATHY IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT IN HEALTH CARE

For patients
and
For caregivers



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THE BENEFITS OF EMPATHY FOR PATIENTS

- Patients want empathy from their physicians and nurses. (Leckie et al; 2007)
- Empathy is essential to quality outcomes
 - Promotes diagnostic accuracy
 - Builds trust and reduces anxiety
 - Increases the patient's likelihood of speaking up and asking questions
 - Unearthing safety issues
 - Enhancing patient comprehension
 - Improves patient adherence to their care plan

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THE BENEFITS OF EMPATHY FOR CAREGIVERS

- Your relationship with your patients is more satisfying and therefore so is your work.
- Your patient engages and achieves better outcomes.
- You receive high ratings from patients and this engenders professional pride
- Reduced malpractice risk

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PRIMARY CAUSES OF STRESS FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

- Demoralization: Loss of meaning (Kissane, 2004)
- Work inconsistent with calling (Pulchaski, 2007)

***Empathic physicians are more satisfied—
with less burnout*** (Eisenberg et al, 2003)

Empathic communication helps to connect caregiver to patient and build a *relationship...* and it is this relationship that leads to *meaning*

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THE PATIENT-CENTERED CARE MODEL RELIES ON EMPATHIC COMMUNICATION---



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THE BIG QUESTION

SO, EMPATHY MATTERS, BUT CAN YOU TEACH IT?



YES!

- The research on Emotional Intelligence proves it. (Dan Goleman)
- There is increasing evidence in health care.
- And many more studies are in the works.

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CAN DOCTORS LEARN EMPATHY?
BY PAULINE W. CHEN, M.D.



YES!

<http://www.nytimes.com>
DOCTOR AND PATIENT JUNE 21, 2012, 2:52 PM

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“People tend to believe that you are either born with empathy or not. But empathy can be taught, and you can improve.”
Dr. Helen Reiss

- Empathy course to physicians included:
 - Practice recognizing nonverbal cues and facial expressions
 - Strategies for dealing with one’s own physiologic responses to high-emotion encounters

**Empathy and Relational Science Program
Mass General Hospital; 2012**



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RESULTS: YES!

Physicians who completed empathy training—

- Interrupted patients less
- Maintained better eye contact
- Better able to maintain their composure if patients became angry, upset or frustrated
- Also reported reduced physician burnout

Reiss, 2012



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**DID TRAINING INFLUENCE PHYSICIANS’
EMPATHIC EXPRESSIONS DURING PATIENT
INTERACTIONS?**

YES!

- Trained physicians more likely to acknowledge patient’s expressed emotion, challenge or progress and invite further discussion.
- Untrained physicians more likely to stop at implicit responses that indirectly or peripherally addressed the patient’s statements.

Patient Ed & Couns 75 (2009) 3-10



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**RESEARCH STUDIES ON PHYSICIAN EMPATHY:
THREE MEASURES COMMONLY USED**

- Global Rating Scale of Physician-Expressed Empathy (Kemp-White)
- Empathic Communication Coding System (Bylund and Makoul)
- Jefferson Empathy Scale (Hojat et al.)

The measures help us understand the elements!



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DOES IT IMPACT NURSING?

YES!

- Of the 17 studies found, 11 reported statistically significant improvements in empathy scores.
- Most promising models are experiential in style

Brunero et al.
"A Review of Empathy Education in Nursing"
Nursing, 2010; Mar:17(1):65-74



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IDEALLY, YOU WILL HIRE EMPATHIC COMMUNICATORS

- Use behavioral interviewing to screen for *spontaneous empathy use*, "Tell me about a time when a customer was filled with feeling and complained to you."
 1. What happened?
 2. What did they say?
 3. What did you say?
 4. And what was the result?



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How to Teach Empathic Communication

- The mindset
- The skill set



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STARTING WITH MINDSET: WHAT GETS IN THE WAY OF EMPATHY?

- Desire to rescue patient –to fix!
- Feelings of powerlessness against the illness and its impact; hard to just “be with”
- Triggers fears--- e.g. of becoming ill oneself (“There but for the grace of God go I.”)
- Failure feelings when the patient becomes sicker
- Desire to separate from and avoid patients to escape uncomfortable feelings

(Meier et al., 2007, p. 3007)

These lead to caregiver disengagement, burnout and reduced ability to provide quality care

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THE MINDSET AND SELF-TALK THAT DRIVE EFFECTIVE EMPATHIC COMMUNICATION

- “There is no right or wrong. This is their experience.”
- “Tune in and listen. *Being with* this person --- bearing witness-- is a gift unto itself.”
- “This isn’t about me.”
- “I can be here for this person right now, no matter what else is going on.”

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EMPATHIC COMMUNICATION: THE SKILL SET

- Avoid the don'ts
- Key empathic communication skills
 1. Presence or Mindfulness
 2. Acknowledging Feelings
 3. Validating Feelings
 4. Following Up on Feelings
 5. Showing Empathy Nonverbally
 6. Heart-Head-Heart Communication



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AVOID THE DON'TS

Don't	Instead
Don't judge.	Be curious, not furious.
Don't ignore feelings and press on.	Stop. Inquire
Don't lecture.	Listen.
Don't be certain.	Sound tentative. Leave room for correction and expansion.
Don't rationalize or interpret.	Reflect back. Check out.



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EMPATHY COMMUNICATION SKILL 1: MINDFULNESS/PRESENCE

- Quiet your racing mind.
- Focus your whole self on the other person. Give them your undivided, respectful attention.
- Fully experience where you are, who you're with and what you're doing

If you are not present to the person, you will miss cues about their feelings and concerns and be **unable** to communicate with empathy.



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PRESENCE: A MENTAL DISCIPLINE 

- Take a deep breath. Bring your attention to the present moment and the person at hand.
- Shift to a posture of presence, Place your legs evenly on the floor. Open your palms. Smile and sustain eye contact. **Lean forward.**
- Face the person fully.
- Open your heart. Tune in. Listen to the person's thoughts and feelings.
- Don't think about what you're going to do next.

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HOURLY ROUNDING WITH PRESENCE: A PIVOTAL OPPORTUNITY FOR EMPATHY

- Enter the room and greet the patient warmly by name
- Become completely PRESENT to them
- Observe and inquire about their needs
- Communicate empathy for their feelings and experience
- Do what's needed
- Offer a gracious goodbye, staying present until you get to the door

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 **EMPATHY COMMUNICATION SKILL 2: ACKNOWLEDGING FEELINGS**

Notice and read verbal and nonverbal behavior and use your words to reflect back the feelings you think the other person may be experiencing.
Sound TENTATIVE and CURIOUS.

- "You sound upset?"
- "You look exhausted!?"
- "I imagine these results must be quite a relief for you?"

People feel understood when we show regard for their feelings, not just for the content of what they say.

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RESPONDING TO CONTENT VS. FEELING

Nurse: "How are you feeling today?"
Patient: "Fine."

The nurse can respond in two ways:

1. Response to content: "Great!"
2. Response to feeling: "Gee, you sound a little down.?"

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**ACKNOWLEDGING FEELINGS
EXAMPLES**

Situation 1:
Coworker: "I'm so sick of Claudia calling off from work. She isn't reliable!"

Situation 2:
Patient: "Now what do you want to do to me? Haven't you done enough tests already?"

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**ACKNOWLEDGING FEELINGS:
WHAT DOESN'T WORK?**

- Presuming
 - "I know exactly how you feel."
 - "I completely understand."
- Shifting the focus to yourself
 - "That happened to me too."
 - "I feel the same way."
- Judging, disapproving, minimizing or discounting
 - "You shouldn't feel that."
 - "I don't see why you would feel that way!"
 - "That seems like an overreaction."
 - "That will pass."

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**EMPATHY COMMUNICATION SKILL 3:
VALIDATING FEELINGS**

Help the person feel....	Sample Words
Justified	"I can imagine how you would feel that way."
Normal	"It's not surprising. I think most people would feel that way if this happened to them."
Less alone	"You're not alone in feeling that."
Understood	"I really hear how hard this is for you."

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 **VALIDATING FEELINGS:
WHAT DOESN'T WORK**

- "I understand!"
- "I know exactly how you feel."

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 **EMPATHIC COMMUNICATION SKILL 4:
FOLLOWING UP ON FEELINGS**

- Instead of recognizing a feeling and moving back to facts immediately, pursue the feeling.
- The person will feel your caring more
- You'll learn valuable information.

Examples

- "You look puzzled. Tell me, what are you thinking?"
- "You seem worried. What's concerning you?"

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**EMPATHY COMMUNICATION SKILL 5:
SHOWING CARING NONVERBALLY**

People 'read' our nonverbal behavior
For empathy.

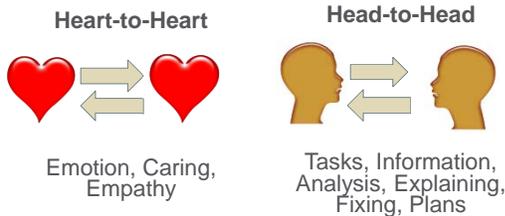


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DOES THE BEHAVIOR MATCH THEIR WORDS?



**EMPATHIC COMMUNICATION SKILL 6:
HEART-HEAD-HEART COMMUNICATION**



**...a PROMPT to communicate with
empathy**



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BOTH  AND  HAVE BENEFITS!

When we speak Heart-to-Heart:

- Patients, families and coworkers feel important, cared for, and understood
- They can hear the Head-to-Head part much better

When we speak Head-to-Head:

- Our customers get valuable information
- They appreciate answers and solutions

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THESE DAYS...

- Busy-ness and pressure make us mainly task-oriented
- Most of our communication is from the HEAD, much less from the HEART
- The Result: Patients and families may view us as uncaring and not tuned in.



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SITUATION: "I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M STILL WAITING. I'VE BEEN WAITING AN HOUR!"

Head Responses:

- "The doctor is running late."
- "It's probably going to be another half hour." She spends the needed time with each patient, so it's hard to predict."

Heart Responses:

- "I'm so sorry about the wait."
- "I really appreciate your understanding."
- "Waiting can be so frustrating. Let me find out for you how long it's going to be."



Did you respond first with your HEAD or your HEART?

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**THE IDEAL:
THE HEART-HEAD-HEART SANDWICH**

"I have been waiting over an hour!!!"

 **Empathy:** *"I'm so sorry for the wait. We know your time is valuable."*

 "The doctor takes the time needed for each patient and it's hard to predict."

 **Intention to Help:** *"Is there anything I can do to make you more comfortable while you wait? Again, I am sorry."*

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 **RECAP
EMPATHIC COMMUNICATION:
THE SKILL SET**

- Avoid the don'ts
- Key empathic communication skills
 1. Presence or Mindfulness
 2. Acknowledging Feelings
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STRATEGIES FOR STRENGTHENING EMPATHY IN YOUR ORGANIZATION

1. Pursue empathic communication as a housewide/system-wide breakthrough objective.
2. Develop champions who conduct skill-building for leaders and staff.
3. Systematically heart-wire the skills in work teams
 - Leadership role-modeling – showing empathy for employees
 - Practice during huddles
 - Spot-checks and role-modeling during leader rounding

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RECAP

- Empathic communication is essential to quality care.
- More people have empathy than show it. We will see great improvement if people develop the skills for COMMUNICATING their empathy. These skills are HIGHLY teachable.
- While you CAN teach it, it is much more effective, efficient and affordable to HIRE empathic people.

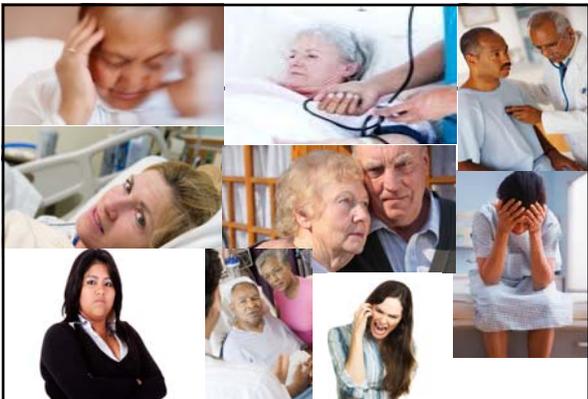
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AS YOU LEAVE, TAKE THIS WITH YOU...

- **For your organization:** COMMIT to bringing more empathy into your organization
- **For your team:** Model it; talk about it
- **For you personally:** The mindset to take away with you....One big question!

What could be going on here?

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**Questions
&
Comments, please!**

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