

## Communication Practices



## Promoting Patient Safety

*Clinicians will be able to:*

- *Advance patient safety*
- *Improve patient understanding*
- *Forge partnerships with patients*
- *Enhance patient satisfaction*
- *Earn continuing education credits*

Three Workshop Choices  
Full and Half-Day Options Available

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## COMMUNICATION WORKSHOPS

Breakdowns in communication can and often do occur in many phases of the clinician-patient relationship. These impediments to a constructive dialogue have become the focus of patient safety initiatives. Such initiatives aim to increase safety in the delivery of health care and improve outcomes for those you treat. Effective communication improves patient safety and fosters greater patient satisfaction. And the more satisfied your patient, the less likely is your risk for a claim alleging malpractice.

### Instructors

Princeton Insurance Healthcare Risk Consultants who have been trained and certified by the Institute for Healthcare Communication (IHC).<sup>1</sup>

### Credits

Clinicians successfully completing one or more workshops will earn continuing education credits. CNE for nurses is available as noted below.

### Courses

- Clinician-Patient Communication to Enhance Healthcare Outcomes (also CNE approved)
- Communicating Unanticipated Outcomes and Medical Errors (also CNE approved)
- Strangers in Crisis

### *Clinician-Patient Communication to Enhance Healthcare Outcomes (CPC)*

## OVERVIEW

**CPC** reframes the clinician-patient relationship, extending the paradigm beyond the traditional diagnosis-treatment model ("find it, fix it"). Elements of effective communication patterns enhance this treatment model, thereby forging a stronger, more reliable partnership between you and your patient.

<sup>1</sup> formerly The Bayer Institute

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Program participants will gain confidence in handling communication challenges and frustrations in these acute care settings with the acquisition of specific skills that can enhance ongoing dialogues with patients, families, and other healthcare team members.

These full-day workshops have been shown to be most effective when offered to groups of no less than eight and no more than 30 participants.

## OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the role of communication in promoting patient and family satisfaction with, and reducing complaints about, hospitalization and emergency department visits.
2. Identify and practice specific clinician skills for communicating with patients, families and colleagues.
3. Master a communication protocol for addressing clinical hand-offs.

For questions or to sign up please contact our risk services department at 866-Rx-4-Risk (866-794-7475).



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## *Strangers in Crisis (SIC)*

### OVERVIEW

Urgent situations and critical decision-making in the often chaotic environment of an Emergency Department (ED) bring together strangers. For patients there are clinicians with whom there is no established relationship, rotating staff members due to shift changes, and unfamiliar surroundings. For the clinician, unknown patients and family members, and fragmented medical histories add to the challenge of providing care in this setting. Seeking a resolution to the emergency is everyone's goal, but often the disparate perspectives regarding the patient and their care unintentionally pit these strangers against one another. One can appreciate the complexities facing the ED physician who must work with such patients and their loved ones. And the unfamiliar perpetuates itself when the time comes for the clinician to hand-off the patient to the care of other clinicians and departments – sometimes also strangers to the clinician.

Unlike many clinician-patient relationships, those forged in the ED are done so with the complicating challenges of time, acuity, complexity, and hastily compiled medical information. And it is in this environment that you are expected to review the information gathered, make a diagnosis and develop a treatment plan.

Perhaps nowhere else in the medical community is communication more vital than for the physicians who find themselves practicing medicine in this demanding and unforgiving environment.

### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The full-day **SIC** workshop provides ED clinicians and hospitalists the opportunity to examine and practice techniques to enhance communication with patients and families in the acute care and ED settings. The workshop aims likewise to enhance team communication at the point of hand-offs of care.

The goal is to involve the patient from the outset in his/her care, by eliciting cooperation with, participation in, and adherence to proposed treatment plans. Unlike previous clinician-patient relationships, in this new partnership, you and the patient *together* work to identify issues and design a response that is amenable and achievable.

Few clinicians are taught effective communication techniques during their professional training. So it is little surprise that these skill sets have to be acquired “on the job” – a job which affords little time, insufficient constructive feedback, or coaching to further develop vital interpersonal skills.

### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The **CPC** workshop is offered in several flexible formats designed to accommodate the needs and schedules of participants.

- Full-day and half-day workshops are available
- Ideally, a minimum of 8 participants, but no more than 30, works most effectively to accomplish workshop goals

Each workshop builds on a foundation of didactic training interspersed with activities to “test drive” the key elements of the communication process, providing immediate, positive, constructive feedback.

### OBJECTIVES

1. Have greater awareness of the importance of clinician-patient communication as an essential aspect of health care.
2. Understand that complete clinical care consists of both “find it, fix it” and four communication skills.
3. Be able to demonstrate the skills and incorporate feedback from peers.
4. Commit to trying out one or two newly learned skills for five weeks and evaluate outcomes.

*Communicating Unanticipated Outcomes  
and Medical Errors (CUOME)*

**OVERVIEW**

Grounded in the patient safety objectives gaining momentum within the health care delivery sector, communication techniques and skills are recognized as being vital to clarifying issues at the most stressful moments in a patient encounter in order to make sound decisions regarding treatment. Allowing for individual communication styles and incorporating a variety of communication guidelines, **CUOME** offers participants an entertaining and challenging program of didactic learning and activities to engage the professional mind.

As a clinician, you are well aware of the Joint Commission standards implemented in 2001 requiring active dialogue with your patients (or their respective representative or guardian) about outcomes that failed to meet expectations... either yours or those of your patient. Supporting the Joint Commission in these initiatives are the AMA, the National Patient Safety Foundation, and a trove of literature related to healthcare ethics – all of which encourage a genuine and timely discussion regarding treatment outcomes that failed to meet desired goals. Unplanned occurrences coupled with silence naturally lead the individual to suspect a problem. Suspicion unaddressed will eventually turn to thoughts of litigation to get to the root of the matter.

Clinicians and staff members who are educated and skilled in understanding the importance of effective communication and have developed the means to communicate meaningfully and compassionately with patients and their families when something untoward occurs are needed to alleviate the problem. The first inclination is to go on the defensive. But history has taught us that a counterintuitive approach of empathy is the first step toward a constructive, healing dialogue. A thoughtful response and a caring attitude go far in building a trusting conversation.

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

Offered in several flexible formats ranging from 1.5 hours to 3.5 hours, the **CUOME** program is optimally designed for eight to 30 participants.

The primary aim for each participant is to develop the skills to help re-establish trust, support and a constructive dialogue in the face of adverse outcomes. Research and literature alike underscore the likelihood of better outcomes when the clinician and the facility effectively respond to concerns raised by the patient and his or her family.

The final result often leads to shared knowledge, acceptance, understanding, and the ability to move past the event with a reduced probability for recourse pursued through litigation.

Elements of empathic, effective communication are taught in tandem with a variety of activities, thereby enabling the participant – at the end of the program – to be better equipped to face an unplanned outcome with sensitivity and confidence while keeping the patient's best interests at the forefront of discussion and decision.

**OBJECTIVES**

1. Understand the rationale for greater openness when there has been disappointment with care and possible injury associated with a medical or systems error.
2. Appreciate others' perceptions of the situation (e.g., patients, family, colleagues, and staff).
3. Consider steps to take before, during, and after a disappointing outcome.
4. Acknowledge and respond constructively to the emotional and ethical challenges in these situations.
5. Practice the disclosure skills in a variety of clinical situations.