



CONSCIOUS, COMPASSIONATE **COMMUNICATION**

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Communicating consciously with self-awareness is critical for having effective interpersonal relationships, functioning medical teams, quality patient care, and high organizational morale. Typically not natural, though, it must be learned. And while health professionals are highly trained and knowledgeable about complex medical issues and technology, they may lack the ability to communicate well with others. Personality, medical training, personal factors, the hierarchy in medicine, and the high stress of being a health professional – particularly in today’s economic climate – all compound the problem.

This highly experiential workshop helps participants examine their communication styles, with what works and what doesn’t. It offers skills to use with colleagues, staff, patients and families, and in personal relationships. Because communication styles are so deeply ingrained, time and practice are required to impact change. It is therefore best to offer this seminar at least as a Part I and II, and ideally as an ongoing series. Mixing differing professionals who work together, i.e., doctors and nurses, is also very effective as it allows for role plays of real-life work situations. Overall these sessions allow for safe discussion of “taboo” topics that lead to a very real healing of relationships and teams, and a rise in morale.

Seminar Topics Include: Based on the group’s needs and number of sessions, focus will vary on these topics:

- Purposes of effective communication
- Effective communication is not natural, necessitating learning new skills and unlearning ineffective patterns
- Barriers to effective communication in medicine and other industries
- The concept that all participants in a conversation are responsible for how it goes and must accept their responsibility
- How the hierarchy within a medical team (i.e., doctor, nurse, technician, etc.) impacts communication and teamwork
- The need to consider oneself part of a team, and to see that team as consisting of equal members, regardless of role
- The roles of respect, honesty and empathy in communication
- How cultural and personal factors, self-esteem and personality impact our “rules” and beliefs about communication
- Dysfunctional styles of communication
- Results of effective vs. poor communication styles on patient care and personnel relationships
- Differences between passive, aggressive, passive-aggressive, and assertive communication styles
- The elements of effective communication
- Appropriate body language, stance, voice volume and tone
- Creating safety, mutual respect and mutual purpose in conversations
- Becoming aware of and identifying personal feelings, emotions and needs
- 2 formal listening models, including “reflective” or “active” listening, and verbal read back / repeat back
- The SBAR model (Situation, Assessment, Background, Recommendation) to reduce errors when colleagues share information with each other and during handoffs
- Appropriate strategies for speaking and verbalizing
- The use of “I” vs. “You” statements
- 2 formal communication models to resolve conflicts that includes expressing feelings, needs and solutions:
 - Non-Violent Communication Skills
 - DESC (Describe, Explain, State, Consequences)
- How to handle difficult situations with patients, families, colleagues and other staff
- Effectively giving and receiving constructive feedback
- Effectively giving and receiving instructions