Surgical Professionalism and Interpersonal Communication Education (SPICE)

Advanced Communication Skills for Surgical Practice

Adina Kalet, MD, MPH
Associate Professor of Medicine and Surgery
Today?

- Feedback from the OSCE
- Rapport Building: It’s what distinguishes the masters!
- Let’s go to the video tape
  - Disclaimer
  - Checklist
Surgical Intensive Care Unit

RESIDENT INSTRUCTIONS

Family Member: Mary McArthur, 55 yo only daughter of Elizabeth Hellman,

- EH is an 84 year old woman 6 days S/P MVA requiring emergent right upper lobectomy.
- Post-operatively, SICU intubated with a GCS of 3 and no reflexes. Status unchanged today.
- She is DNR,DNI based on a Advanced Directive in her outpatient Chart. No durable power of attorney listed.
- Your Team has decided to extubate her based on irreversible medically futile condition.
- After deciding this, you are told that someone who has identified herself as the patient’s daughter, Mary McArthur wants to speak with you.
- What is your role?
- What are your goals?
- What are the professionalism issues?
“Professionalism is demonstrated through a foundation of clinical competence, communication skill, and ethical and legal understanding, upon which is built the aspiration to and wise application of the principles of professionalism: excellence, humanism, accountability, and altruism”

-Stern and Arnold, 2006
“By three methods we may learn wisdom: first by reflection, which is noblest, second, by imitation which is easiest; third by experience which is bitterest.”

- Confucius
Delivering Bad News Video Clip

Note: Imbed video from popular TV medical program on the topic of breaking bad news
Developing Expertise
“Deliberative Practice”

Practice

Feedback
Feedback: How are we doing?

N=27, 3 PGY levels

✓ Transfer of Care from ER
✓ “Sign Out” Impaired colleague
✓ “Hernia Repair” Wrong side surgery
✓ “Health Proxy” Discussing withdrawal
✓ “Bad News” Unexpected OR death
✓ Informed consent through interpreter
Aspects of Professionalism Measured Across cases

Communication Skills: 3 Functions ($\alpha = 65$)
- Information Gathering
- Relationship Development
- Patient Education and Counseling

Relevant Knowledge Base ($\alpha = 62$)
- Case Specific Skills

Patient Satisfaction ($\alpha = 72$)
- Recommendation to others
Cronbach’s Alpha = .76

Cronbach’s Alpha = .53

Cronbach’s Alpha = .76

Overall Cronbach’s Alpha = .82

Communication

Relationship Development

Patient Education and Counseling

Information Gathering
Overall Communication Scores (% Well Done)

Mean = 52%
Std Dev = 15%
Communication Skill Domains (% Well Done)

- Information Gathering: Mean=68%, SD=14%
- Relationship Development: Mean=51%, SD=22%
- Patient Education: Mean=35%, SD=14%

T Bars=Min/Max
Gray Line=Mean
Box=Inter Q Range
Communication Scores by Case

T Bars=Min/Max
Gray Line=Mean
Box=Inter Q Range
Overall Professionalism Scores (% Well Done)

Mean = 45%
Std Dev = 12%
Professionalism Scores by Case

% Well Done

Hernia Repair  Health Proxy  Bad News  Sign Out  Interpreter  Transfer

T Bars=Min/Max
Gray Line=Mean
Box=Inter Q Range
Mostly NOT Significant except Ethics: PGY 2 < 4
Perceived Professionalism

**Accountability**
- Answer communications (e.g., pages) in timely...
- Ensure transfer of responsibility for patient...
- Follow through on tasks you agreed to perform...

**Ethics**
- Acknowledge medical errors
- Apply appropriate confidentiality safeguards...
- Ensure that patients are completely and honestly informed...
- Maintain appropriate relationships with patients
- Recognize when you have a conflict of interest...

**Inter-Disciplinary Collaboration**
- Receive and respond well to criticism from peers...
- Resolve interdisciplinary conflicts in a collegial...
- Serve as a role model for other members of health...
- Treat nurses and other health care professionals...
- Work collaboratively with other professionals

**Patient Centered Care**
- Act without discrimination or bias...
- Ask patients and families about their beliefs...
- Be sensitive to patients’ immediate physical...
- Demonstrate tolerance for a range of behaviors...
- Respect patient rights and dignity by showing...
- Take the time and effort necessary to explain info...
- Treat the patient as an individual by taking life...

**Practice Improvement**
- Identify areas for improvement within your own...
Three Functions of Clinical Communication

- Data Gathering
- Relationship Building
- Patient Education/Information Giving
The evidence for relationship building skills:

Better Diagnosticians

- Avoid interruptions
- Make eye contact
- Use facilitative body language
- Have positive attitudes toward patients
- Are willing to ask about psychological distress
- Make emphatic comments
  - Giron, M. et. al. 1998
The evidence for relationship building skills: Patient Adjustment to Illness

Delivering Bad News:

Anxiety and Depressive is doubled if perceived as “inadequate”

(Fallowfield, 1986)

Unhurried, honest, balanced, and empathic delivery leads to better satisfaction

(Cunningham 1984)
The evidence for relationship building skills:

Patient Satisfaction

- Closely linked to patient centered skills

- Patient complaints associated with poor relationship building
  - “never looked at me once”
  - “made me feel humiliated”
  - “Used medical jargon that confused me”

  - Frankel et. al.
The evidence for relationship building skills

Physician Satisfaction
“tip of the iceberg”

- **Lawyers know:**
  - Malpractice does not lead to suits
  - Perceived lack of compassion is primary motivation to sue

- **Study Shows:**
  - 71% of suits due to “problematic relationship issues”
  - Protective Behaviors: statements of orientations, laughter and humor, facilitative behavior
What to *do* when you don’t know *what* to say….

- Be quiet, listen, don’t change the subject
- Remain patient/family member centered
- Explore patient's concerns further
  - Make eye contact (put down your pen)
  - Offer encouragement
  - Give explanations
  - Make empathic comments
Relationship building Skills

- Patient centered
- Perceived by the patient as caring and interested
- Emotions recognized accurately
- Emotion Responded to appropriately
Skillful Physicians Must....

- Work with emotion
- Take-in verbal and non-verbal data
- Be willing to respond
- Respond appropriately
- Be self-aware
Recognizing Emotions

- Notice non-verbal communication (90% of emotional content)
- Notice verbal emotional expression
- Ask when you are not sure
- Notice mismatch - trust the non-verbal
P.E.A.R.L.S

- Partnership
- Empathy
- Apology
- Respect
- Legitimization
- Support