Teaching Communication Skills

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Writing Exercise

You have just finished seeing a 3 year old girl with fever who has an obvious case of Coxsackie. The mother insists that you treat with antibiotics.

How would you handle this?
Please write out the exact words and phrases you would use as in a script.
Teaching Complex Skills
The Challenge

You are teaching your nephew how to drive. The best approach would be:

A) Tell him to keep quiet and watch you drive
B) Have him drive alone – while no one is watching – then have him report to you on what he did
C) Tell him to read a textbook on driving.
D) Tell him to get in the car and drive, then scream at him and take over.
E) Tell him he should already know how to drive.
F) Show him how to accelerate, stay in lane, slow down, stop and turn. Have him practice each component separately in front of you, then give him feedback.
Effective Models of Communication

1) Most common procedure
2) Effective communication directly linked to better outcomes
   ● Adherence
   ● Diagnostic Accuracy
   ● Complication rates
   ● Recuperation periods
   ● Patient satisfaction
History

- Consider the following scenario. What feedback would you provide?
Scenario

MD: “What brings you here today?”
Parent “She’s (3 year old) been vomiting.”
MD: Any diarrhea?”
Parent: “She’s not keeping anything down.”
MD: “Any fever?”
Parent: “She just keeps vomiting.”
MD: “Is she urinating less than usual?”
Parent: “No.”
MD: “Is she thirsty?”
Parent: “It’s hard to tell, she’s been sleeping all day.”
MD: “OK, no problem. Its most likely viral.”
Scenario

MD: “Why are you here tonight”
Parent: “My daughter (3 years old) has a fever.”
MD: “How high has it been?”
Parent: “101.”
MD: “Any other problems?”
Parent: “She’s got a runny nose.”
MD: “Any other problems?”
Parent: “No, everything else has been fine.”
Advice

A) “Good job”
B) “Strong work”
C) “You could read more”
D) “Have you considered a career in PEM?”
E) “Are you from Manhattan?”
F) “Describe your approach, consider the template for effective communication – which parts did you address?”
History

- What are the essential components (tasks) of a good patient history?
Goals of the HPI

- **Therapeutic:** Build a connection to the patient and linked to better adherence to therapy, shorter recuperation times, increased patient satisfaction
- **Diagnostic:** Make an accurate diagnosis
Template: History
Rapport and Diagnostic Accuracy

- **Build Relationship**
  - Create Environment

- **Open the discussion**
  - Clarify complaint (open ended first minute to get the story)

- **Gather information**
  - Pertinent positives/negatives/ Level of illness

- **Understand Patient’s Perspective**
  - (explicitly ask)

- **Summarize and reflect on visit to this point**
Patient Education

- Goals?
  Enhance patient’s health (Adherence)
  Enhance family’s health (Partnership and Knowledge)
- Essential Components?
Template: Patient Education

- **Share Information**
  Provide your diagnosis and explicitly check for understanding.

- **Reach Agreement**
  Check for conflicts between patients perspective/explanatory model and your perspective/explanatory model
  - and respectfully negotiate a solution.

- **Provide closure**
  State next steps and describe what is likely to happen next and what to do about it
Other Templates in Medicine

- ABC’s: Level of Illness
- HEADSS: Adolescent screen
- CAGE: Alcoholism screen
- PE: Accurate and complete performance
- HPI: Therapeutic/Diagnostic Test
Templates

- Maximize chance of consistent behavior
- Foundation of “habits”
- Cerebellar/ Professional Approach
- Art Vs. Science
- Provide common language for feedback/evaluation
- Other Example: Humanistic Behavior
Task

- Prepare one person to interview the following patient. Spend 5 minutes strategizing how you might approach this.
Role Play:

- You are seeing a 16 year old girl with Chest Pain. She has been to the ER 5 times in the past 7 months and has had 2 normal ECG’s. Her exam has been normal. Your task is to obtain a history and advise her of your findings.
Role Play

- You are a 16 year old girl who has been having chest pain for 7 months. You are generally quite shy and would not volunteer anything personal unless asked in an explicit and supportive manner. You are sure that there is something wrong with your heart – because your mother has a heart problem. You are very upset about September 11th and haven’t felt safe since – but you are somewhat embarrassed about that. Again – you would not volunteer this easily. If it doesn’t come up – you would probably appear to be somewhat upset – (not dramatically so). Otherwise you are doing well and HEADSS is unremarkable.
Checklist

- How did the checklist help you provide feedback or evaluate the trainee?
- How might you incorporate the checklist into your work?
Role Play

You have just finished seeing a 3 year old girl with fever who has an obvious case of Coxsackie. The mother insists that you treat with antibiotics.

How would you handle this?
Role Play: Mother

- Your daughter has a fever and has not been eating. You believe that antibiotics are necessary. You feel that the doctor needs to convince you that he/she is doing something to make things better. You are terrified that since your child is not eating that something terrible will happen – and that it will happen at night when you are alone with her – since the child’s father works nights. You will be flexible if the doctor respectfully addresses your fears – you will dig in your heels if you perceive that the doctor is patronizing you and discounting your ideas about your child.
Scenario

Best response would be:
A) Tell her its just a virus.
B) Tell her that antibiotics don’t help treat viruses.
C) Tell her that there are no medications that can treat this virus.
D) Tell her to seek another opinion if she doesn’t believe you.
Template: *Patient Education*

- Share information (diagnosis and work up)
- **Clarify understanding/ Patient’s perspective**
- Reach agreement on problems and plan *(negotiate)*
- Closure (Include anticipate what the next day/days will bring)
Template: *History*

Rapport and Diagnostic Accuracy

- **Build Relationship**
  - Create Environment

- **Open the discussion**
  - *Clarify complaint (open ended first minute to get the story)*

- **Gather information**
  - *Pertinent positives/negatives/ Level of illness*

- **Understand Patient’s Perspective**
  - *(explicitly ask)*

- **Summarize and reflect on visit to this point**
Scenario

A colleague has just finished seeing a 2 year old girl with diarrhea and vomiting. The history and physical examination are consistent with viral GE. You observe the following:

MD: “It’s nothing, she’ll be fine.”

Parent: “What about the vomiting.”

MD: “That’s part of the virus.”

Parent: “Oh.”

MD: “If she has any trouble urinating, bring her back in. In the meantime, have her drink small sips of clear liquids.”
Parent: “Can she eat food? She doesn’t want to eat anything.”
MD: “It’s OK, as long as she drinks.”
Parent: “Oh.”
MD: “Any questions?”
Parent: “Um, no.”
MD: “You can go to your regular doctor next week for follow up, OK?”
Parent: “OK.”
Scenario...

The best advice would be:
A) “Good job.”
B) “You should have told them that they can feed through.”
C) See the next patient.
D) Consider the BRATT diet.
Scenario

The patient returns 12 hours later with the same complaint. When you ask what happened during her previous visit the mother says “I don’t know, they said it was nothing.”

How could this have happened?
Alternative Role Play

- You are seeing a 4 year old boy with moderate persistent asthma – you decide he needs to be on inhaled steroids. The mother looks very skeptical – and seems to be “yessing” you – although you suspect that she is uncomfortable with the plan. Also – she didn’t adhere to your instructions about this on the last visit. Instead, she has been using Vick’s as a treatment when he starts to cough. How would you approach this?
Alternative Role Play: Mother

- The doctor wants your son on steroids. You understand that steroids are a bad medicine – used by athletes – that can kill a person. You also are somewhat mistrustful, because your doctor has never told you about how Vick’s Vapor Rubs help – and you and your friends swear by it. You like your doctor and don’t want to argue – so you figure you will just smile and leave. You are open to listening and considering another option, if your doctor engages you respectfully and finds out how you see it. You also need to have the doctor show flexibility and respect for your treatments at home. If the doctor is patronizing about your approach – politely thank him/her and leave.
Summary: Template: History
Rapport and Diagnostic Accuracy

- Build Relationship
  (Therapeutic)
  - Create Environment
- Open the discussion
  (Therapeutic/Diagnostic)
  - Clarify complaint (open ended first minute to get the story)
- Gather information
  (Diagnostic)
  - Pertinent positives/negatives/ Level of illness
- Understand Patient’s Perspective
  (Therapeutic/Diagnostic)
- Summarize and reflect on visit to this point
  (Therapeutic)
Template: Patient Education

- Share information (diagnosis and work up)
- Clarify understanding/Patient’s Perspective
- Reach agreement on problems and plan (negotiate)
- Closure (Include anticipate what the next day/days will bring)
Next Steps

- Videotaping
- Debriefing
Summary

Teaching a skill (HPI and Patient education): Kalamazoo Statement

- Template for HPI (Rapport/Diagnostic Test)

  - Diagnostic Test: Clarify Complaint/Pertinent Positives/Patient’s Perspective/Level of illness

  - Rapport: Build Relationship - Environment/Open Discussion - First minute – open ended/Gather pertinent data – including level of illness/Patient’s perspective/Share info/Clarify understanding/Reach agreement - mutual decision/Closure
Summary

- Template for Patient Education

  Share information (Diagnosis & work up) / **Clarify Understanding (Patient’s Perspective)** / Reach agreement / Closure (anticipate and treat)
Template: *History*

Rapport and Diagnostic Accuracy

- **Build Relationship** (Therapeutic)
  - Create Environment
- **Open the discussion** (Therapeutic/Diagnostic)
  - Clarify complaint (open ended first minute to get the story)
- **Gather information** (Diagnostic)
  - Pertinent positives/negatives/ Level of illness
- **Understand Patient’s Perspective** (Therapeutic/Diagnostic)
- **Summarize and reflect on visit to this point** (Therapeutic)