

# Professionalism and the Patient Experience

Patient Services Managers for Networks 7, 15, and 17

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# What Is Professionalism?

- The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines a professional as:
  - *Characterized by or conforming to the technical or ethical standards of a profession.*
  - *Exhibiting a courteous, conscientious, and generally businesslike manner in the workplace.*



# Why Is Professionalism Important?

- Patients who come to your clinic to dialyze:
  - Are ill and vulnerable.
  - Have expectations about how the interaction should go and how you, as the dialysis provider and healthcare professional, should behave toward them.



# Role Reversal

- How would you react if you were in the hospital and the following happened?
  - You heard one nurse talking negatively about another nurse.
  - Your nurse spoke a language you did not understand in front of you to another staff member.
  - Your nurse smelled of cigarette smoke or strong perfume.
  - The nurse/technician/doctor did not explain to you what he or she was doing as it was being done.
  - You observed a hospital staff member roll his or her eyes when asked for assistance by another staff member.
  - You heard a staff member groaning about being ready to end his or her shift.

# Less Obvious Unprofessional Behaviors

- Unprofessional, but not so obvious behaviors include:
  - Calling a patient by a nickname, unless specifically requested by the patient to do so.
  - Driving a patient to the mall in your own car.
  - Loaning a patient money.
  - Spending time with a patient outside the dialysis center.

# Professional Behavior

# Characteristics of Professional Behavior

- Professional behavior in the dialysis clinic includes:
  - Greeting the patient upon arrival.
  - Explaining what you will be doing and why.
  - Being open to patient questions.
  - Performing your tasks competently.
  - Doing what you say you will do.
  - Pulling up a chair and talking to the patient at eye-level.
  - Being aware of your tone of voice.

# Improve Professionalism Through Self-Awareness

- Improve your professional and people skills by asking yourself:
  - What are my strengths and weaknesses?
  - How can I improve my professionalism?
  - What am I doing to create a healthy professional environment?
  - Are my interactions positive in nature?
  - Am I making a good impression on my patients and with other staff members?
  - What lessons have I learned that will help me to provide the best quality of care to patients?



# What Is a Boundary?

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines a boundary as:

- *Unofficial rules about what should not be done: limits that define acceptable behavior.*

# Avoid Crossing Boundaries

- When you are doing something with/for a patient, ask yourself if this activity:
  - Is a normal, expected part of practice for members of the profession?
  - Could compromise your relationship with this patient, other patients, and/or colleagues?
  - Might cause others to question your professional objectivity?
  - Is one in which you would want your other patients, colleagues/professionals, or the public to know you are engaged?
  - Is more to benefit you or the patient?

# Be an Effective Communicator

- Recognize that different individuals respond to different communication styles.
- Realize that some styles are more effective than others in certain situations.
- Shift your communication style based on your patient's needs and the situation.



# 10 Steps to Better Listening by Forbes

**Step 1:** Face the speaker and maintain eye contact.

**Step 2:** Be attentive, but relaxed.

**Step 3:** Keep an open mind.

**Step 4:** Listen to the words and try to picture what the speaker is saying.

**Step 5:** Do not interrupt and do not impose your "solutions."

**Step 6:** Wait for the speaker to pause to ask clarifying questions.

**Step 7:** Ask questions only to ensure understanding.

**Step 8:** Try to feel what the speaker is feeling.

**Step 9:** Give the speaker regular feedback.

**Step 10:** Pay attention to what *isn't* said to nonverbal cues.

# Ten Tips on How Professionals Should Handle Patient Complaints

**Tip 1:** Listen to your patient's complaint without interrupting.

**Tip 2:** Listen for your patient's disappointment.

**Tip 3:** Move your patient to a quiet and private area to discuss his or her complaint.

**Tip 4:** Avoid rationalizing, being defensive.

**Tip 5:** Avoid educating—now is not the time.



# Ten Tips on How Professionals Should Handle Patient Complaints (cont.)

**Tip 6:** Avoid going into “problem-solving” mode immediately.

**Tip 7:** Respectfully use the patient’s name in your reply.

**Tip 8:** Demonstrate understanding.

**Tip 9:** Start the grievance paperwork—hand it off to the right person to address it.

**Tip 10:** Circle back afterward and ask if your efforts were effective.



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# Thank you!

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