

Improved Patient Outcomes with Patient-Centered Care and Interdisciplinary Team Work

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Quality, patient-centered care is extremely important to me from both a personal and professional standpoint. In my university, patient-centered care and interdisciplinary work is greatly encouraged and studied in depth in my courses. I've taken interdisciplinary courses working on leadership, cohesiveness in teams, working with each professional's scopes/strengths, and recognizing the importance of creating a positive, respectful work environment. These concepts have transferred over into my clinical settings, where I am encouraged to participate in rapid rounds, can connect my patient with the interdisciplinary staff members at the facility, and have the opportunity to shadow other professionals to see their day-to-day activities. I believe encouraging students at a young age to engage in interdisciplinary experiences is crucial to promoting a well-functioning, cohesive team in our healthcare system. I believe making experiences, such as this conference, an available option for students to apply for is yet another opportunity to grow and develop their knowledge and interpersonal skills without financial status interfering. I believe another way that we can encourage interdisciplinary competencies in our students, is having professionals in the field come to our classes to present and interact with us. This way, we can meet with these professionals in a more appropriate setting and ask them questions that we otherwise may not have the opportunity to pose to them. I personally try to assist with this concept by going to high schools and attending community events to talk about my experiences in the field of science and in the field of nursing. It's my hope that by being available to mentor and answer questions, that I can encourage young minds to join me in the medical field, or perhaps answer questions other individuals have about the role of a nurse.

Regarding patient-centered care, I believe I have a thorough understanding about the importance of this from both personal experiences and professional experiences. During my stays within the healthcare system as a patient, I've had great experiences, and unfortunate experiences. I've had nurses, doctors, and physiotherapists show me great care and compassion, ensuring I completely understand everything that was happening. This left me feeling supported and calmed my nerves during a stressful period in my life. Unfortunately, I have also had negative experiences while being cared for, where I felt ignored, judged, unheard, and felt I had lost my autonomy. Having these experiences, as well as being taught about patient-centered care in my courses has helped to ensure I have a solid knowledge foundation regarding the importance of respect and including a patient/their family in their care. I think we can promote patient-centered care by having real patients come into the classroom setting and sharing their experiences with healthcare professionals. I find having a real-life individual present makes a big difference in putting forth a perspective versus just watching a video, because it allows us to experience the raw emotion and stories that ultimately make a lasting impression. I think it's also important for students (or staff) to practice scenarios where they are put in a patient-like situation and have the opportunity to experience hypothetical high quality and low quality patient care. I find first-hand experience to be beneficial to creating stronger connections and improving empathy for our patients.

I also believe it is important to accommodate our patient's language needs. I am in the process of being published for my French translation work on an international research project called "Questions About Alberta's Health Care System," which aims to facilitate information access across multiple languages for prospective international students in their preferred language. I think this sort of project is a great step in the right direction, as it helps to prepare

students for their future if they choose to live in Alberta, and decreases their anxiety in trying to understand basic needs, like healthcare. This project has taught me to use my talents in whichever way possible to benefit the greater good. I am blessed to know how to speak both English and French, but I need to remember my own privilege and ensure others are able to access materials and goods to the same extent that I can. This sort of project could be transferred into a nation-wide initiative, improving access for healthcare information across Canada and the United States of America.

All of these experiences have influenced me to move forward in my career and become a better nurse. I want to ensure that I am advocating not only for my patients, but for their families, and helping out around my community, so that we can help reduce the amount of stigma and barriers that are in place for individuals to get the help that they need. I truly believe that creating quality patient-centered care is a team effort, and I am glad to see our universities taking the steps to improve interdisciplinary work early on in our training.