



Can you hear me now? Listening to Our Older Adults to Improve Care

Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital
RWJ Barnabas Health System

APRIL 23, 2017

PROGRAM PRESENTER:

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Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset Somerville, NJ

- 355 Beds
- Hospital
- Only hospital in Somerset County, NJ
- Magnet - 2 time designation
- NICHE designated since 2008
- Senior-Friendly status
- Part of the RWJ Barnabas Health System



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Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital New Brunswick New Brunswick, NJ

- 632 Beds
- Hospital
- Level I Trauma Center
- Magnet - 5 time designation
- NICHE designated since 2008
- Senior-Friendly status
- Part of the RWJ Barnabas Health System



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Objectives

- Identify the importance of listening to older adult patients
- Discuss the facilitation of a panel discussion emphasizing caregiver awareness
- Review results of a pre and post survey focusing on the needs of older adults





Needs of the older adult

- As our geriatric population lives longer, the acute and chronic conditions faced by the older adult expand as each year passes
- Nurses need to identify and understand both the physical and psychological needs of their older adult patients
- These special needs can be overlooked as we go about our daily tasks and take care of the medical complexities of our patients






So why is this so important?

- When we are attentive to both the physical and psychological needs of our geriatric patients, we are providing a safe environment for our patient and their loved ones
- Quality of patient experience and caregiver-patient communication are vital aspects of overall quality of care, especially for older adults


Heiss, Lynn, Conforti & Holmboe, 2011



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So why is this so important?


- The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services considers the perspective for older patients to be so important that it conducts a continuous annual survey of older adult beneficiaries in fee-for-service and managed care plans concerning satisfaction with care
- Listening and good communication with the patient are key ingredients needed to ensure a good patient experience in the clinical setting



Heiss, Lynn, Conforti & Holmboe, 2011

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'If we could all just learn to listen, everything else would fall into place. Listening is the key to being patient centered'.

Ian McWhinney

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What did we do at RWJ?

- Recognized that patient satisfaction surveys on both campuses consistently indicated the need for better communication with our patients
- Identified that active listening was one of our challenges
- Addressed the need for developing better listening skills as part of our annual geriatric nursing conference on the Somerset campus in September 2016


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How did we do it?

- A pre-survey was administered to the conference attendees asking the participants to rate their perception of their current ability to care for the older adult
- Survey consisted of 4 questions, one each specific to:
 - Meeting the physical needs of the geriatric patient
 - Meeting the emotional needs of the geriatric patient
 - Meeting needs of family members
 - Ability to communicate with the geriatric patient and their family



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How did we do it?


- Two older adults later participated in a panel discussion and provided two very different perspectives of the care they received while in the hospital
- A post survey with similar questions about perceived ability to care for the older adult was administered to the attendees along with an additional question specific to their feelings derived from the discussion

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Survey Results




Physical needs:


Pre Panel Discussion	Post Panel Discussion
20%	51%

Emotional needs:


Pre Panel Discussion	Post Panel Discussion
20%	54%

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Survey Results




Family member needs:


Pre Panel Discussion	Post Panel Discussion
20%	54%

Communication:

Pre Panel Discussion	Post Panel Discussion
25%	54%

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Results

- Results showed a drastic change in the attendee's self perception of their ability to care for the older adult after listening to the experiences of the geriatric patient/spouse first hand
- 77% of the attendees also reported that it was very likely that they would incorporate their feelings from the panel discussion into their future care of the geriatric patient population
- Feedback also included comments specific to how their communication would increase and change for the better after listening to the feedback of these older adults


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Impact on Future Practice

- Attendees felt that their communication skills with their geriatric patients and their families needed to be more patient-focused
- Improving listening skills was considered to be one of the top priorities for the attendees
- All agreed that active listening would significantly improve the patients' and families' perception of care that they receive




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So in conclusion.....




- As healthcare providers it is important for us to meet all of the needs of our older adult patients
- It starts with learning to actively listen to what our patients and their families have to say

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Yes, I can hear you now!!!!

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References

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