



Practice Focus

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Series 5 Personal Growth and Practice Development

Session 6 Patient Success Equals Practice Success (Part 2)

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1. Listen to the audio recording.
 2. Follow along with this transcript.
 3. Use the transcript to help complete your Team Activity: **key points are highlighted.**
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Hi, everybody. How are you doing? I hope you're doing great. You know, as a matter of fact, I have no doubt, and that's because you decide to be great. It is a choice, isn't it? Every single day, every person makes a choice. And sometimes it's as soon as they open their eyes or have their first conscious thought, or maybe first cup of coffee. And for others, it's when their feet hit the floor, when they start driving their car. But the best people, people like you, they pre-decided the night before that tomorrow is going to be a great day. A decision, folks, to make it a great day is your own responsibility and it will be made possible by the things you say to yourself and the communication you have inside your head. One of my favorite quotes is, "You are today where your thoughts have brought you, and you will be tomorrow where your thoughts take you." There you have it.

So with all that said, I challenge you to make a daily decision to have a great day and to be mindful of how you talk with yourself and always remember that no matter where your thoughts have brought you until this moment in time has no bearing on where they will take you, for better or worse, because your future has not yet been written. And you get to decide based on your thoughts if you like where you're headed or you'll regret where you're going. This whole communication with yourself thing is far more critical and impactful than most anyone ever realizes, and especially, accepts responsibility for. I have great news and it happens to be our topic here today. This same sentence, the very same sentence, applies to your patients also about their thoughts bringing them to where they are right now and taking them to where they're going with one big exception, which is the great news.

And that's that you get to be involved with them and you get to talk with them, too. Therefore, you can shape their future by the way you communicate with your patients, leaving nothing up to chance. We're going to do this in three parts over the next few months. Today, first, we're going to be talking about your team's communication and how it helps or hurts, enhances or detracts, increases or diminishes your patient's mindsets and overall their experience and their journey towards complete health and comprehensive case acceptance, and truly, how your communication sets you up for success or failure, a great day or a bad day. And we're going to make a decision in advance to make it which of those we really want and we deserve.

Last month, we talked about the connected patient experience and making sure there were no gaps in the process, and also taking a deep dive review around how patients move from team member to team member and assessing your overall experience.

Today, we're going to keep that theme while making it exclusively about communication. You've gotcha! We call this full-circle communication, friends.

Think about that old adage of the front and the back and how there's always some gaps or discrepancies or breakdowns between the front and the back, whether that's in the schedule or the daily flow, or in the timing of visits, or whatever, and insurance and x-rays and treatment plans. I mean, does it ever end? This all comes back to one thing and one thing only: miscommunication or misunderstanding, missing or no communication altogether, or ineffective and inaccurate communication. I guess that's a lot more than one thing, but it's all communication. There is nothing else. The solution to this is full-circle approach to communicating in your practice and having a seamless patient experience and seamless team dialogue that sets you up for success.

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The tactics and steps and responsibilities of this were discussed last month. Now I want you to literally envision and draw a circle if you want to, and think at whatever point the patient enters if we're truly going to do a great and complete job, then the patient will travel in a circle back around to a seamless finish with no gaps or fragmentations. And like a circle, there is no beginning or end, it just keeps going. And that is who you want your team communication to be. Just exactly like that. Now, that's the evolution of a team's communication and it is exactly like your decision to have a great day. It's a daily thing. It's actually a moment-by-moment thing, patient-by-patient. It is an all day, all the time, every single minute making sure that you are not becoming, you, you are not becoming, the gap or the missing or inaccurate part of the communication in your practice.

This has to do with three areas of responsibility that you own. First, am I doing a thorough and complete job with my roles and responsibilities in my individual tasks and outcomes? That's you, baby! How are you doing with what you are the owner of? Secondly, am I communicating clearly and effectively to whomever is in need of this information or the next step or any other concept of the connected experience? And then the third part, of course, is am I receiving everything I need to be able to do one and two at the highest and best level every single time? Now, I'm skipping the whole attitude thing. That's why we started with choosing to have a great day. So, obviously, there is an element of your just general personality and performance and your commitment, which we will talk about to being a great communicator and working on and developing this.

But within these three things, in order to be effective, you own your complete and thorough job of your responsibilities and the communication that goes within those that the clear and effective transition or transfer of information to the next person, that's the communicating. And it doesn't just have to be in a patient experience. This is going to be anything from reports or tracking statistics or dealing with labs. It doesn't make any difference in supplies. And then also, am I receiving? Why do I say that? It's your responsibility to hold team members accountable for what you need from them. And if everybody does that and everybody's dialed in on these three things, we could have the whole meeting about this, ok, these three things, these three, then it's perfect. Then we're in harmony. We're in synergy. *Simpatico*, pick any word, and it's all coming together.

It requires you to own these three areas of responsibility. If you have all three of those and you are conscious of them and you hold them sacred, then you will do well and you will help your team members do better. As an aside, you're going to have some fun next month actually playing a little game, if you can believe that. We'll see how you do. In order to set that up this month, though, I'm going to give you some specific things to talk about, and once again, you can break into departments or you can stay together as a whole group. It certainly will be your choice, but for now, hold that thought. First, before you do this, let's work and take this topic of full-circle communication and have an open discussion as a group. Here is your Practice Focus and your exercises for this month, each one building on the next.

First, we start with the positive. I want you to talk about all the ways your communication has improved over time of late with new team members or veteran team members, et cetera. Go back as far as you wish up to this moment and I want you to do what I said in the quote. Thoughts led us to where we are, and they will take us where we're going. So first, where are we at? Okay, how are we doing? In what ways have we improved? Positive reflection.

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Let's build a positive conscious list of some examples of how you've improved your communication, and this can include any technology or systems that have been used as well.

Second, I want you to do the opposite, not think about negative, but instead think about the opportunities to improve, and I want you as a group to discuss where you feel there are some inconsistencies or gaps or breakdowns in communication that cause frustration, disagreement, poor execution, or hurt the patient experience.

This requires your critical thinking and assessment, and we're talking directly about team and doctor communication. It might creep over into patients, but try to stay focused on each other where mistakes are made on scheduling or timing of visits or labs, or even operatories or insurance or whatever. Make a big mess. If we draw that circle of communication in your practice, where does it come apart? And once in a while is once too many.

Continuing on with this, once you feel that list has been exhausted and probably nitpicked to death, then I want you to take every one of them and come up with some solutions and ideas for every single one. Please remember, don't take any of this personal. Everything is about helping each other become better. There's not one person there who doesn't want to do their best every single day, and to be helpful and contribute to your team winning.

As they say, "Perception is reality," so no matter what someone might feel like or think they are doing, if it's not working for someone else, then it has to be discussed. Because communication is only a solitary thing and the way I began your Practice Focus with today. All other communications is between other people, and therefore, everyone has a say and a voice.

Now, if you want to break up into groups or you want to stay together, either way, I want you to take this list of solutions to the areas you have identified to improve and assign them to each area within the practice that they're applicable to. And then that person or team or department is going to come up with how they're going to implement these and bring them to life on a daily basis or a visit-by-visit basis. Take your list of solutions, and then the people responsible to bring them to life and carry them out come up with a quick plan on how you're going to implement and instill and integrate them into your daily culture for success.

Now, listen, that shouldn't take more than not even 10 minutes I would think. So discuss and bring it back together as soon as you can. And similarly to the last month, I want you to start with one person and go through your circle of communication from what you receive and what you send out and make sure there are no gaps that exist in any information or communication in order for you to be the very best team member possible, and that there are no questions that remain about any variable or what ifs or circumstances or situations that you want to ask about. This is about taking your three areas of responsibility, and open-dialoguing them through in front of everybody all together all at once. Once everyone has acknowledged this, we're on the final home stretch. And I want you to take a quick rundown on one final question, and that's it, you're done.

The most viable way to keep full-circle communication alive is to set yourselves up for success with effective and disciplined and routine meeting structures. Having time to communicate is the way to ensure communication happens. If you value it, first and foremost, you are clear as we've talked about it many times about our morning huddles, our end-of-the-day debriefs, our weekly check-ins, our monthly trainings, and our deep dives,

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quarterly assessment review of progress and renewal of goals, and all of these different methods and meetings, structures and tools you have. For today, and the sake of time, I want just a quick and final run through that goes like this.

When are we meeting and what's the objective? When are we meeting and what's the objective? Based on that, rate yourselves on a scale from 1 to 10. Say, morning huddles: every morning, "How we doing, 1 to 10?" End of the day, weekly, monthly, Practice Focus, this and that, all the things, all the times you come together as a team to communicate.

Then ask yourselves, what would make it a level 10 of effectiveness and of productivity? Are you holding your time sacred? Is everyone prepared or is everyone there? Is there enough time to accomplish the goals and make the meeting count? You get the idea. What would make it a level of 10 every single time, all the time, for all of you? Everyone needs to be on the same page, held accountable, and have clarity about how to do their part and make every single team meeting and engagement, no matter how big or small or frequent, as successful as possible. You get the idea, friends. This shouldn't take long and if you don't make it through, then do it the very next chance you get, because it's critically important and it will be a rising tide to everything else.

And hey, that's a wrap, and a very intense and jam-packed Practice Focus all about the single most important and valuable thing you do individually, but also altogether. The most important and valuable thing you do that makes everything else possible: communication.

I can tell you this, your commitment to and mastery over your quality and effectiveness of the communication will determine 100%, absolutely the degree of success you have, and like water, it will seek its own level. So everyone must have integrity with this and do their part to keep your circle complete. Full-circle communication begins with a decision, just like your day, and then you bring that decision to life with every word you think and say, and ultimately, with your actions. And I know you'll make it great. Until next month, take care and get to work.