

“What I Learned as a Patient” – A Personal Story

I would like to share my personal experience as an inpatient related to my recent hip replacement surgery. Although I have been imparting with you my experiences as a nurse, it certainly opened my eyes to live a couple of days as a patient. Regardless of my extensive clinical knowledge, as a patient there can be a feeling of vulnerability and apprehension – like a child in an unfamiliar and new environment.

“How can I help you today?”

I was impressed that staff nurses, who met me for the first time, took a few minutes to introduce themselves to purposefully establish rapport. They asked if there was anything else I needed; this simple question strengthened my confidence and trust in them and the entire nursing staff. Larry and I frequently speak of the importance of building a relationship before “teaching the patient” – I fortunately experienced the direct value of this lesson. Simple open-ended questions, asked with a smile, the first time you meet a patient will go a long way to establish rapport and trust. Here are three examples:

- 1) “How are you doing?”
- 2) “How can I help you today?”
- 3) “Is there anything else you need me to do for you?”

What additional questions do you use to bond with patients?

Go Slow to Get There Faster

Too often, due to limited time with the patient, we jump into our teaching, before the patient is ready to receive. I can understand this. Like we discussed in the first Med-Revu Newsletter, it is important to employ open-ended questions to involve the patient, which will lead to rapport and trust. Open-ended questions will slow you down at first; yet, the answers to them will provide insight into what is important to your patients, and give you a point to continue to build your teaching.

All the Best from Your Partners in Patient Engagement

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