



## IHC Patient-Centered Communication Series: Coaching Clinicians for Enhanced Performance CCEP

### Overview

One of the key features of healthcare that patients value and remember is the communication performance of clinicians and healthcare team members. Patient satisfaction assessment has grown from a quality control and marketing tool to a basis for provider evaluation and compensation in some settings. A growing literature documents the central role of communication in patient satisfaction. Effective communication between clinicians and patients promotes a variety of benefits including improved diagnostic accuracy, better health outcomes, improved treatment adherence, mutual satisfaction with medical encounters and decreased risk of malpractice lawsuits. Of equal importance for patient care is the effectiveness of communication among members of the healthcare team.

Effective patient-centered communication skills are learnable skills. Many clinicians have had limited exposure to explicit and intentional training focused on communication, and varied models for interacting with patients. Some view communication training as “fluff”: non-technical and therefore of lesser value. In fact, from the patient’s perspective, excellent technical clinical skills alone are insufficient for a satisfactory experience. Combined with sound clinical skills, effective communication raises the level of patient satisfaction in measurable—and clinically significant—ways.

Everyone communicates, but not everyone communicates in ways that optimally promote patient-centered care. Some communication approaches must be unlearned because they interfere with the clinician-patient relationship. This is not an effortless process. When the healthcare culture supports an environment to help clinicians and teams realize their potential and maximize performance, such communication behaviors that are destructive can be prevented and corrected.

IHC offers intensive, experiential workshops and online courses that build awareness and foundational skills in evidence-based communication techniques. For the best and most lasting improvement of clinicians’ communication skills, research and educational evaluation support the implementation of reinforcement and support following training workshops.

Ongoing clinician support includes periodic one-on-one coaching from a person who understands the clinical environment, identifies and can model the skills to be learned, and appreciates the coaching process through which they can be learned. IHC is experienced providing communication workshops and individualized clinician coaching on a fee-for-service basis to client organizations. As an effective and sustainable alternative, IHC’s ***Coaching Clinicians for Enhanced Performance (CCEP)*** will train one or more selected individuals within your own organization to provide individualized clinician coaching and support.

Individual clinicians who are coached are also eligible for a minimum of 7.0 CME instructional hours (offered through IHC).

Coaching requires a set of attributes and skills predicated on building trust and understanding, intentionality, support and balanced feedback. Such coaching attributes and skills are essential when working with clinicians in the development and enhancement of their clinician-patient communication skills. Similarly, these skills can be applied to other content and performance areas in clinical practice beyond communication skills. Successful coaching requires role clarity, an understanding of learning-centered coaching and learning, assessment tools, goal setting, feedback and action planning.

IHC has recently partnered with the Veterans Health Administration National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention and Employee Education System to provide clinician coaching training. The IHC-VA training served as the model for ***Coaching Clinicians for Enhanced Performance***, which was piloted successfully in the summer of 2011 and has been offered bi-monthly since January 2012 and has led to the national training of over 200 trained clinician coaches across the VA healthcare system. They currently provide clinician coaching to help primary care and other clinicians improve their patient interactions, particularly in self-management of chronic conditions, health risk behavior change and adoption of healthy living behaviors.

Healthcare systems and medical practices that invest in focused communication skill development can expect to see measurable improvements in patient satisfaction scores, clinical outcomes and clinician job satisfaction.

## Audience

***Coaching Clinicians for Enhanced Performance*** is designed for healthcare professionals who value communication training and model effective patient-centered care through their clinician interactions and teaching and professional development responsibilities. Ideal qualifications include:

- completion of one or more IHC train-the trainer faculty courses, and/or
- current teaching experience with IHC or other communication-focused curricula, and/or
- at least 4 hours of face-to-face training in [motivational interviewing](#).

Other candidates are welcome to apply and are asked to provide a narrative regarding their skill set, experience and motivation for participating in the course.

## Content

The goal of ***Coaching Clinicians for Enhanced Performance (CCEP)*** is to enhance learners' clinician coaching skills through structured practice opportunities.

CCEP consists of 20.0 instructional hours focused on the following topics:

- Models of learner-centered learning and coaching
- Review of core communication skills

- Setting coaching learning objectives
- Understanding the coaching process
- Motivational Interviewing (MI) as a foundation for clinician assessment and coaching
- Models for clinician intervention
- Issues around implementing clinician coaching

## Expectations

**Coaching Clinicians for Enhanced Performance (CCEP)** trains healthcare professionals who have or plan to have responsibility for professional development specific to clinician-patient communication.

Organizational support is key to the effectiveness of clinician coaching programs, and we expect sponsoring organizations to implement clinician coaching as part of—and in alignment with—other efforts to enhance the patient experience through improved communication skills among and between its employees.

Learners are expected to participate in all activities in the full 2.5-day program. To minimize distraction, IHC recommends that learners be freed from additional work-related tasks for the duration of the training.

## Learning Objectives

As part of this course, learners will:

1. Learn a stepwise process for coaching and providing feedback
2. Practice coaching and balanced feedback techniques via simulation sessions
3. Develop a clinician coaching implementation action plan

By the end of the course, learners will be able to:

4. Identify and apply assessment tools to understand learning needs and preferences of clinicians
5. Guide clinicians in setting behavioral and performance goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely

## Methodology

The 2.5 day CCEP course is *intense and interactive*, conducted over three consecutive days at a host organization and with 8 to 24 learners. All IHC courses are predicated on best practices in clinician-patient communication and emphasize a standard large and small group learning format to provide peer observation, feedback and coaching.

The course combines large group presentations and exercises with small group interactive learning using a faculty-to-learner ratio of 1:4 to allow significant attention to individual support and feedback and paired coaching practice. Each session offers principles, teaches skills and allows learners to practice skills in a controlled environment (small group learning).

During the program, learners practice coaching and feedback strategies with one another and with “simulated” clinicians (actors). The simulations provide realistic and contextually relevant scenarios for “real time” coaching practice. Because of the emphasis on practice, learners have adequate opportunity to refine their own clinician-patient communication skills as well as to develop their coaching and feedback techniques.

IHC will provide each learner with a completed set of educational materials: a coaching manual (with slide scripts, facilitation guides, teaching strategies and tools), coaching training video vignettes, clinician CE workbook, annotated bibliography and a carrying bag.

## Faculty

Faculty are IHC Master Trainers and qualified and experienced facilitators. All faculty have significant experience providing clinician coaching and teaching patient-centered communication skills.

## CME

The Institute for Healthcare Communication is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) to sponsor continuing medical education for physicians. The Institute for Healthcare Communication takes responsibility for the content, quality, and scientific integrity of this CME activity. ***Coaching Clinicians for Enhanced Performance*** is designated by the Institute for Healthcare Communication as a continuing medical education activity meeting the criteria for up to 20.0 hours in Category 1 of the Physician’s Recognition Award of the American Medical Association and for nursing continuing education credits.

In addition, IHC provides a minimum of 7.0 CME hours to clinicians who participate in the coaching by an IHC-trained clinician coach.

### **For further information, please contact:**

Institute for Healthcare Communication  
171 Orange Street, 2R  
New Haven, CT 06510-3111  
203-772-8280  
[info@healthcarecomm.org](mailto:info@healthcarecomm.org)  
website: [www.healthcarecomm.org](http://www.healthcarecomm.org)