



IHC Patient-Centered Communication Series:

Coaching for Improved Performance

Introduction

Every clinician must have highly developed communication skills. This role cannot be delegated to others. Research has shown that communication skills have a direct impact on diagnostic accuracy, adherence to therapeutic regimens, patient satisfaction, and the likelihood of malpractice litigation.

Communication skills must be learned. They are not innate. Similarly, some communication approaches must be unlearned because they interfere with the clinician-patient relationship. This is not an easy process. However, it is made easier by periodic one-on-one coaching from a person who understands both the skills to be learned and the process through which they are learned.

Coaching itself requires a set of specific skills. While these skills can be applied to the development of clinician-patient communication skills, they can be applied to other content areas as well. Successful coaching requires role clarity, an understanding of different educational processes, and the skills to implement these techniques.

The Challenge

The coaching relationships found in the performing arts and athletics are designed to achieve excellent rather than acceptable levels of performance. To attain these levels of performance, coaches use a variety of techniques from perceptive observation, to instruction, demonstration, encouragement, and exercises. The simple provision of feedback or mini-lectures is not sufficient to pursue excellence.

The challenge of coaching in the health care organization is to create an environment in which excellence, shared accountability for performance, and commitment to improvement are all valued. These values must be supported and acted upon by trained coaches whose knowledge and skills enable them to develop high level communication skills in the clinicians with whom they work.

The Program

Coaching for Improved Performance consists of 24 instructional hours and is usually conducted in three consecutive days. The program uses a small group format with six to twenty-four members in a group. A faculty ratio of one faculty member to every four participants allows for considerable individual attention and for a high level of involvement for all group members.

During the program, participants practice coaching strategies with one another and with clinicians from outside the training group. Standardized patients provide realistic scenarios, and “real time” coaching is practiced. Videotaped feedback provides each participant with an opportunity to see him or herself in the coaching role.

Various coaching models and approaches are presented and demonstrated so that each participant has an opportunity to evaluate what model(s) will be most effective for him or her to utilize.

Because of the emphasis on practice, participants have an opportunity to develop their own clinician-patient communication skills as well as develop coaching techniques.

For further information, please contact:

Institute for Healthcare Communication

171 Orange Street, 2R

New Haven, CT 06510-3111

(800) 800-5907

info@healthcarecomm.org

website: www.healthcarecomm.org