



## IHC Patient-Centered Communication Series:

# Treating Patients with C.A.R.E. Faculty Course (Train-the-Trainer)

### Overview

The benefits of effective communication between patients and providers and among healthcare team members are well documented: patients have better health outcomes, better adherence to treatment plans and more consistent follow-up, as well as higher levels of satisfaction with their care. The ***Treating Patients with C.A.R.E.*** curriculum further teaches effective communication skills to increase patients' confidence in their care, convey an impressive impression of the facility and increase patients' ability to carry out steps of treatment. Providers enjoy greater job satisfaction and lower rates of burnout and stress. Healthcare providers across all specialties and roles face continual pressures and challenges ensuring optimal patient care and satisfaction.

A variety of factors contribute to the challenges of providing consistently impressive patient care, at the same time that patients and payers are increasingly demanding higher levels of service. Staff members are under continual time pressure, organizations frequently face resource limitations and patients may be experiencing pain and anxiety, and may vent their frustrations on healthcare staff.

From the patient's perspective, every person employed by the healthcare organization contributes to the care experience. A rich and growing literature supports the value of patient-centered care and a relationship of trust between providers and patients; in addition, providers are increasingly evaluated and compensated based on patient satisfaction. Please see IHC's annotated [bibliography](#) for further information.

The ***Treating Patients with C.A.R.E.*** workshop has had a dramatic impact on the care of patients and their families in organizations across North America. Through the efforts of over 330 faculty, thousands of healthcare clinicians and support staff members have learned effective skills to improve their communication with patients and families.

Individual healthcare team members who communicate effectively with patients and with one another are best equipped to navigate these challenges. As important as communication skills are to clinical and interpersonal interactions, many organizations do not provide training in this area.

As part of IHC's effort to help organizations build training capacity around communication skills, IHC has developed this 2.5-day "train-the-trainer" faculty course. Participants gain preparation as IHC faculty

members, qualified to teach IHC's *Treating Patients with C.A.R.E.* workshop, which provides evidence-based skills to help the members of healthcare teams meet their patients' needs and work together more effectively as teams.

## Audience

*Treating Patients with C.A.R.E.* is open to clinicians and non-clinical support staff members and supervisors with training responsibilities and aptitude, who will lead *C.A.R.E.* workshops. Workshops can accommodate 8-24 learners to ensure individualized attention and optimal small group learning.

## Content

The *Treating Patients with C.A.R.E.* workshop provides a conceptual model and specific techniques that guide all staff members—anyone who comes in contact with patients—to communicate in ways that will enhance satisfaction and encourage patient partnership. Participants use their own experiences in health care to identify staff actions that make a difference. The *Treating Patients with C.A.R.E. faculty course* encompasses four areas of focus, described below:

1. Mastery of the content and facilitation skills for *Treating Patients with C.A.R.E.* workshop
2. C.A.R.E. skills
3. Feedback skills
4. Implementation and rollout of *Treating Patients with C.A.R.E.* workshops

### **Mastery of the content and facilitation skills for *Treating Patients with C.A.R.E.* workshop**

Participants in the *Treating Patients with C.A.R.E. faculty course* practice and observe one another presenting components of the *C.A.R.E.* workshop. There is particular focus on three key components of effective workshop leadership:

- **Lecture versus Activity**

The workshop is designed to include a great deal of activity and relatively few—and brief—lectures. All of the lectures are less than twenty minutes in duration and most are in the ten- to fifteen-minute ranges. It is very important that the workshop leader engages participants in the activities and does not get caught up in lengthy elaboration.

- **Graduated Involvement**

The workshop's graduated design moves from the first exercise, which considers what it is like to be a patient. It continues with exploring each of the four components of the C.A.R.E. model and how these components are acted upon in real life situations. Video case scenarios provide stimulus for observation, analysis and discussion. Group exercises encourage learners to think through how these techniques apply to the participant's own situations. In this way, participants move from personal experiences as patients, through abstract application of skills via video case situations, to realistic application to their own situations. It is critical that the workshop leader has an understanding of the

design as a whole and of each component of the design — how it works, why it works and why it is part of the program.

- **Full Participation**

Unlike group discussions where some people get involved and others remain quiet, all of the C.A.R.E. workshop activities involve all participants. From a learning standpoint, the theoretical grounding of this approach can be found in the research on cooperative learning and, more recently, action learning. The task for the workshop leader is to explain the steps clearly and to encourage all participants to work with their partners on the tasks.

### **C.A.R.E. skills**

Essential skills are organized into a four-point model:

- **Connect**, through a personal connection to the patient and family
- **Appreciate** the patient's and family's situation, assuring they feel heard and understood
- **Respond** in ways that are helpful to the patient and family
- **Empower**, inspiring patients' confidence to contribute to their own health and health care

The workshop, which is presented in its entirety at the outset of this faculty course, is a fast-paced interactive program that gives participants opportunities to practice key skills and techniques. Participants view video encounters between staff and patients and work in small groups on skills that apply in a variety of realistic situations.

### **Feedback skills**

Providing feedback is one of the most important elements of effective teaching. Learners report feedback is one of the most important qualities of effective teachers and preceptors, and research evidence shows that learners who receive regular feedback learn faster, perform significantly better and show more advanced professional judgment. Feedback is also highly valued by learners. When medical residents were surveyed to identify the characteristics of great teachers, provision of feedback was rated the second most frequently cited characteristic after clinical competence.

Participants receive feedback from IHC Senior Trainers and faculty and learn to provide feedback in accordance with the "www-eby" model of feedback. The "www-eby" model provides a structured approach for focusing on "what went well" and what could be "even better yet". Properly implemented, this model ensures a safe and supportive environment for learners and specific observations to enhance learning.

Faculty course participants practice applying this feedback model to their fellow learners' rehearsal workshop presentations during the course. The feedback model is part of a structured coaching model with the following steps: (1) learner articulates his or her expectation and goals, (2) learner rehearses workshop facilitation to small group, (3) learner provides self-assessment of workshop rehearsal, (4) small group members provide structured feedback, and (5) learner incorporates feedback into practice.

## Implementation and rollout of *Treating Patients with C.A.R.E.* workshops

Toward the end of the faculty course participants are involved in a discussion about how to roll out the **C.A.R.E.** workshop at their home organizations. Participants and Senior Trainers brainstorm ideas and strategies for securing buy-in from their organizations' senior management, recruiting staff to attend **C.A.R.E.** workshops, marketing **C.A.R.E.** workshops and measuring the impact of workshops. Course participants are invited to create action plans for themselves that include scheduling workshops, identifying workshop participants, identifying the number of workshops needed to reach staff, working within organizational timeframes and related activities.

## Expectations

Learners are expected to participate in all large and small group exercises and discussions. This is a validated approach for adult learners, grounded in the research on cooperative learning and action learning. Learners consistently report high value receiving feedback from their peers and sharing their experiences in this structured and safe environment.

To minimize distraction, IHC recommends that learners be freed from work-related responsibilities for the duration of the training.

## Learning Objectives

After participation in this ***Treating Patients with C.A.R.E.*** faculty course, learners will be able to:

1. Define the four key elements of the **C.A.R.E.** communication model for delivering impressive healthcare service (Connect, Appreciate, Respond and Empower),
2. Demonstrate the four key elements of the **C.A.R.E.** communication model and describe examples from practice,
3. Practice facilitation skills when presenting the ***Treating Patients with C.A.R.E.*** workshop, and
4. Create an action plan to deliver the ***Treating Patients with C.A.R.E.*** workshop at home organization.

## Methodology

Participants in this faculty course practice presenting components of the ***Treating Patients with C.A.R.E.*** (**C.A.R.E.**) workshop and provide feedback to one another. They practice engaging their audience in activities and maintaining the flow of the workshop.

Participants are exposed to the theory and practice underlying graduated involvement, consistent with best practices in adult learning. Train-the-trainer faculty course learners practice guiding workshop participants as they move from personal experiences as a patient, through abstract application of skills via videotaped case situations, to realistic application to their own situations. All of the **C.A.R.E.** workshop activities involve all participants. From a learning standpoint, the theoretical grounding of this approach can be found in the research on cooperative learning and, more recently, action learning. The task for the leader is to explain the steps clearly and to encourage all participants to work with their partners on the tasks.

Throughout each faculty course, IHC Senior Trainers and small group facilitators provide feedback to learners and assess their readiness to conduct **C.A.R.E.** workshops. In the event that additional support and coaching is needed prior to teaching a **C.A.R.E.** workshop, IHC Senior Trainers are available to provide such personalized support and guidance. Individualized support is scheduled separately and subject to additional fees.

## Faculty

The faculty members who teach the ***Treating Patients with C.A.R.E. faculty course*** are experienced educators designated as IHC Senior Trainers. Senior Trainers have extensive clinical and clinical teaching experience.

## CME

The Institute for Healthcare Communication (IHC) takes responsibility for the content, quality and scientific integrity of this CME/CE activity. IHC is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) to sponsor continuing medical education for physicians. IHC designates this 2.5-day ***Treating Patients with C.A.R.E. faculty course*** for a maximum of 18 *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™*. Physicians should only claim credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

Continuing education (CE) credit may be available to nurses, medical assistants, staff supervisors and other non-physician participants. IHC will provide a certificate of completion, which can be submitted to learners' respective accrediting organizations. IHC is pleased to provide any necessary documentation to help learners gain CE credits for completion of this activity.

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

Institute for Healthcare Communication  
171 Orange Street, 2R  
New Haven, CT 06510-3111  
(800) 800-5907  
[info@healthcarecomm.org](mailto:info@healthcarecomm.org)  
website: [www.healthcarecomm.org](http://www.healthcarecomm.org)