



IHC Patient-Centered Communication Series:

## The Empathy Effect:

### Countering Bias to Improve Health Outcomes (EE)

#### Workshop

#### Overview

In every aspect of healthcare, trusting relationships between the healthcare team and patients are essential for optimal care. In healthcare, as in all human interactions, people hold ideas and feelings about others that may involve judgment, demonstrate stigma, and reflect bias, which is demonstrably harmful for all people, and more so for those who are most vulnerable in our society. Blue Shield of California Foundation, recognizing the scope and significance of trauma among safety net clinic patients/clients and employees, has funded the creation of this communication skills training program.

While most people who work in healthcare are drawn to service, few have exposure to explicit and intentional training focused on evidence-based communication and models for interacting with patients/clients. Combined with sound technical skills and patient-friendly systems, effective communication raises the level of patient adherence and satisfaction in measurable—and clinically significant—ways.

***The Empathy Effect: Countering Bias to Improve Health Outcomes*** provides a fast-paced and highly interactive workshop that combines opportunities for self-reflection and practical skill-building in structured activities and small group settings.

#### Audience

***The Empathy Effect: Countering Bias to Improve Health Outcomes*** is designed for everyone who works in healthcare who comes into contact with patients/clients and families. We strongly recommend that all members of the healthcare team participate in *The Empathy Effect*, to build common vocabulary and expectations for evidence-based communication skills. Workshops can accommodate 6-30 learners to ensure individualized attention and optimal small group learning.

The workshop is appropriate for a wide variety of healthcare audiences, including medical, dental and mental health practices; hospitals and hospital systems; managed care organizations; medical, dental and other professional schools; specialty societies; and government agencies.

## Content

In this 4.5-hour training, *The Empathy Effect: Countering Bias to Improve Health Outcomes (EE)* presents an extensive research base, a commitment to active learning and input from a diverse array of experts. The training uses structured self-reflection and focuses on practical skills that learners can bring to their daily work immediately.

The EE workshop is based on three foundational premises:

1. Empathy is healing and judgment is harmful,
2. Vulnerable populations experience greater harm by judgment and lack of empathy, and
3. We all have judgments, and we can learn to mitigate them.

IHC's model for effective empathy conveyance embodies six essential techniques, each of which is treated in detail and with learner participation.



Throughout the workshop, learners are invited to participate in a series of exercises that are graduated to engage learners around their own experiences in a safe and supportive environment. Facilitators model effective communication skills and learners receive an extensive annotated bibliography, available on IHC's website ([EE bibliography](#)) and supportive materials including a detailed skill summary for the IN GEAR model.

## Learning Objectives

1. List two of the three premises for empathy-based care
2. Identify the elements of the IN GEAR model for empathy conveyance
3. Identify two internal or external cues associated with interactions that invite judgment
4. Name at least one counter cue to shift from a view of judgment to one of understanding
5. Demonstrate at least two examples of conveying empathy

## Methodology

***The Empathy Effect: Countering Bias to Improve Health Outcomes*** is fast-paced and interactive, with a strong focus on opportunities to practice skills and techniques in a safe and structured environment. The majority of the workshop is interactive, combining individual and small group exercises to analyze video enactments of actual cases and role play to apply newly learned skills to contextually relevant cases.

## CME/CE

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 provide continuing medical education for physicians. The Institute for Healthcare Communication designates ***The Empathy Effect: Countering Bias to Improve Health Outcomes*** workshop for a maximum of 4 *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™*. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

IHC and the University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing jointly provide this Continuing Education Workshop. The University of Pittsburgh is accredited as a provider of nursing continuing professional development by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation. Nurses completing a jointly provided Continuing Education Workshop and the evaluation tool will be awarded the appropriate number of contact hours for that specific workshop.

Continuing education (CE) credit may be available to 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  
100 Great Plain Road  
Danbury, CT 06811  
(800) 800-5907

[info@healthcarecomm.org](mailto:info@healthcarecomm.org)

[www.healthcarecomm.org](http://www.healthcarecomm.org)