



**RHH**  
ROYAL HOBART HOSPITAL

**EMERGENCY**

**Addressing &  
Resolving  
Patient  
Concerns**

**Sample**



# The Key to Meeting Expectations: Resolving Concerns

- As Emergency providers, we strive to provide patient-centered care and place great value on communicating effectively with patients.
- Being able to quickly find out *why the patient came to the Emergency Department – what their concerns are*- is crucial to meeting their expectations.
- Data shows that patients who have unmet expectation are less satisfied with the care received, reported less symptom improvement, and reported weaker intentions to adhere to the physician's advice.

# Why Do People Hide Their Concerns?

- Fear to find out something is really wrong: "What if I have cancer?"
- Fear of disapproval or rejection: "I don't want them to think I'm stupid"
- Conflict phobia: "What if the Dr. gets mad at me for asking?"
- Emotional perfectionism: "If I show I'm afraid they'll think less of me."
- Passive-aggressive behavior: Using the "silent treatment", to elicit feelings of guilt on others. Bouting instead of disclosing feelings.
- Hopelessness: "No one can help me, I might as well not even try" (self-fulfilling prophecy)
- Mind Reading: A tendency that others *should* know how they feel and thus provides an excuse to engage in non-disclosure.
- Martyrdom: "I'm not going tell them what's wrong and give them the satisfaction to know they are right."

# How Do We Find Out Their Concern?

- Gain their trust: Smile, be professional
- They must believe you care: Show empathy
- Ask them point blank: "What is it that you are worried about that made you come to the Emergency Department today. What are you concerned about?"
- Acknowledge their concern (restate): "Ok, I see; you are worried that you have pneumonia. Is that correct?"
- Ask if there are other concerns: "Is there anything else you are worried about?"

# The Importance of Resolving the Concern

- You meet their expectation for coming to see us
- Can help you avoid unnecessary testing/diagnostics
- Knowing the concern can guide the direction of the work up
- May help us make the correct diagnosis
- Will make them more likely to follow our medical advice
- Will make them more likely to see us again in the future

# Patients Do Have Some Basic Expectations

- The need to be listened to
- The need to receive clear explanation and instructions about their condition
- To be treated by staff who show care/concern/compassion
- To be treated by staff who are professional in their work

**There is no reason why we shouldn't be able to meet all of these  
BASIC EXPECTATIONS**

# Our Goal: Find the Concern

- With this information in mind, I challenge you to find your patient's concern during each and every visit.
- Do not leave their room without knowing what it was that they were worried about [and thus the reason they came to see us].
- Now we have 3 tools in our Customer Service toolbox:
  - Communication
  - Respect
  - Resolving their concerns



# Thank You for What You Do!

- These skills apply not only to what we do in our work.
- They are useful in our everyday lives and in our relations with friends, family and colleagues.
- Communication is important and our human nature sometimes gets in the way.

**"Communication-the human connection- is the key to personal and career success."**

**-Paul J. Meyer**