



Case Study Living the Mission Through Standardized Behavior

Overview: Hospitals and healthcare systems declare their commitment to providing patients with an excellent patient experience, which typically includes safe, high-quality clinical care, delivered with respect, compassion and empathy. It is literally their mission.

When patient ratings indicated our hospital was missing the mark on the service side of patient experience, we set a goal to transform organizational culture, by focusing it on values-based behavior expectations, with recognition and accountability.

Tapping into Motivation:

Most healthcare professionals want to provide consistently respectful, compassionate, empathetic care. I guided a grassroots process to develop behavior standards that resonated with employees' professional values, aligned with organizational goals and patient expectations, and delivered the mission.

Bringing the Mission to Life:

The effective adoption of behavior standards is a deliberate process. My communication plan included a launch plan as well as a long-term communication strategy, layered with opportunities at all levels of the organization to reference, reinforce and recognize the behaviors in action. Patient stories about memorable care experiences, as well as data from patients illustrate and reinforce the consistency of their experience. Written materials, recognition programs (from senior leadership, unit leadership, and coworkers), references in employee communication, etc., help keep the "Why?" up front and the standards prioritized.

Critically, senior leaders must be committed, visibly following the standards in their daily work, and medical staff must be motivated to hold themselves accountable to the same standards. Workflow changes, ultimately, are driven by the behavior standards. And a key performance indicator dashboard, regularly shared at staff meetings and large group forums, shows employees how their behavior makes a difference over time.

Results:

Anchored by the new behavior standards, this hospital achieved top performer status from its patient satisfaction survey company for many subsequent years, in the top five percent of hospitals in the database. Patient surveys confirmed the consistency of their care experience, employees engagement surveys indicated caregivers were proud of meaningful, values-based

change, and the transformed culture became a self-sustaining, virtuous cycle driven by core behaviors that were understood by all.