

RELATE™

Example: The ED Lobby

Patients and family members in the ED lobby (waiting room) can experience significant stress and anxiety related to lengthy waits and the stressful environment.

Reassure:

- Welcome patients and visitors promptly.
- Create an environment that is neat, clean, safe and comfortable as possible.
- Triage and attend to patients promptly (*and tracking that number*).

Explain:

- The process to the patient and their family members.
- What the next step in the process for them is going to be.
- The process honestly but in a cordial, non-judgmental manner.

Listen:

- To the patients; chief complain, concerns, and body language.
- To each other as members of the team.

Answer:

- Questions proactively that patients or visitors may have.

Take Action:

- Refer to the waiting room as “the lobby” or “front reception.”
- Round on patients and all visitors in the lobby.
- Consider making a PA announcement during peak times following a script.

Express Gratitude

- Thank them for their patience and cooperation.
- Apologize, if appropriate, for any delay.
- Consider service recovery, as needed, for exceptional cases.

[RELATE™ in the Emergency Department]

RELATE is an acronym for the recommended communication model for all personal interactions
RELATE stands for: Reassure, Explain, Listen, Answer, Take Action and Express Appreciation.

(Step 1):

Reassure the patient that we are confident and competent to alleviate fear and anxiety.

(Step 2):

Explain what you will be doing and most importantly why. This is the time to manage expectations for the patient and family.

(Step 3):

Listen by encouraging the patient to ask questions and express any of their concerns.

(Step 4):

Answer the questions or concerns and check for understanding.

(Step 5):

Take Action by conducting the procedure while continuing to explain what you are doing.

(Step 6):

Express Appreciation in some way such as thanking the patient for choosing our facility or thanking them for letting us care for them today.

Coaching in Action:

Tip: Learning the RELATE™ acronym takes a little while. Start with the R and E, hardwire them in the ED. Then add quickly the remaining L, A, T, and E to hardwire them for the long-term.

[RELATE™ Topic Areas]

- Nurse communication
- Doctor communication
- Responsiveness of staff
- Cleanliness of room and bathroom
- Quietness of area around room at night
- Communication of medications
- Discharge information
- Overall rating of hospital
- Transition of care
- Quality and safety measures

Accountability Corner:

Tip #1: Use a competency tool to evaluate how each staff member uses RELATE™.

Tip #2: Make RELATE™ an annual competency.

Tip #3: Use the RELATE™ online course as a required annual education initiative.

Tip #4: Make the RELATE™ communication model an everyday, every person, every encounter habit

Tip #5: Keep reinforcing the message and application of RELATE™

- Role play in forums
- Include examples in employee newsletters
- Feature examples on communication boards

The Survey Power of RELATE™

“The use of RELATE™ can potentially contribute to improving any of the domains or key drivers within a survey. RELATE™ is used best when taught in combination with Words that Work™ and other of our tactics, such as rounding. RELATE™ can become the framework for how everyone in the emergency department communicates.”

~Eric Heckerson, PX Coach