

A Review on Guide to Patient Counseling

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Abstract: *The process that occurs when a client and counselor set aside time in order to explore difficulties which may include the stressful or emotional feelings of the client. The act of helping the client to see all the things clearly, possibly from a distinct view-point. This can help the client to focus on feelings, experiences or behaviour, with an aim to make positive change, a relationship of trust. Confidentiality is important for prosperous counseling. Professional counselors will usually explain their policies on confidentiality, they may, however, be required by law to disclose information if they believe that there is an endanger to life. They are the highly trained individuals who are able to use a different range of counseling approaches with their clients.*

Keywords: Patient Counseling, Verbal Communication, Nonverbal Communication, Motivation

1. Introduction

Pharmacist today are aware that the practice of pharmacy has evolved over the years to include not only the composition and dispensing medicines to the patients, but also interaction with the patients and other health care providers in every part of the provision of pharmaceutical heed. Although from 1922 to 1969 pharmacist were prohibited from discussing therapies with their patients, recent changes to standards and legislations have made the provision of information a responsibility.

In the routine ideology of pharmaceutical care, pharmacist are responsible directly to the patients they serve. From this patient centered view patient counseling improves patient care. From the pharmacist's point of view, it is integral to provide competitive and professional pharmacy services. It is evident that patient counseling and patient-pharmacist interaction are key to the pharmacist role today. The most important role of patient counseling is to improve the standard of life and provide excellent care for patients.

The existence of so called "drug mishap" (unfavorable effects, side effects, drug interactions and errors in the usage of medicines) and non abidance to treatment programmes minimize standard life and interfere with standard care.

Patient counseling has the following Purposes: assessing the patient's understanding of the therapy, including proper use and adverse effects of the medication; improving patient compliance; and impelling the patient to take an active role in health management. Studies have revealed that patient counseling can improve patient care in various ways⁴:

- Reducing medication errors
- Increasing patients understanding and management of their medical illness
- Lowering the incidence of adverse drug reactions and drug-drug interactions
- Raising patient outcomes and satisfaction with care

Nevertheless all pharmacists implements various techniques to counsel patients, many skills are needed for desired pharmacist-patient interaction during patient counseling session. Following are features of effective patient counseling⁵:

1) Communicate Verbally

Pharmacists can encourage dialogue by asking questions. They should estimate what the patient already knows about his or her chosen therapy and modify the counseling to meet the needs of each individual patient. Ask patients what their physician has told them about the selected therapy and the condition for which they are being treated.

2) Communicate Nonverbally

In addition to verbal communication, it is necessary for pharmacists to be aware of nonverbal communication, such as maintaining eye contact with the patient, to demonstrate interest in the information the patient is imparting. Pharmacists also should be aware of other nonverbal clues, such as facial expressions and tone of voice, when interacting with patients.

3) Listen

When entreating patients about medication therapy, listening to the concerns, questions, and needs of the patient is essential. Listening skills can be categorized into 4 classes: passive listening, acknowledgment responses, encouragement, and active listening. Passive listening occurs when the pharmacist enables the patient to communicate without interruption. An acknowledgment response such as nodding occurs during passive listening and alerts the patient that the pharmacist is indeed listening. Pharmacists also can use uplifting strategies through the use of words such as "yes" or "carry on." Active listening includes 2- way interactions between the patient and the pharmacist and always should be implemented after passive listening.

4) 4. Ask Questions

When presenting questions to the patient, pharmacists also should state the reason for asking certain questions, so as not to annoy the patient.^{8,9} Enquiring open-ended questions enables pharmacists to collect more information that may lead to other questions and/or provide valuable information to the pharmacist to further help the patient.

5) Remain Clinically Objective

It is prime important for pharmacists not to allow personal beliefs, either ethical or religious to influence their ability to counsel a patient effectively. Pharmacists should make every possible effort to be unprejudiced and impartial, to focus on patient care, and to maintain a professional demeanor.

6) Establish Trust

Pharmacists are among the most approachable and trusted health care providers. When initiating a patient counseling session, pharmacists should introduce themselves with a brief, friendly greeting to make patients feel comfortable enough to ask questions about their medication therapies and health conditions. Pharmacists who demonstrate a genuine interest in patient care are more likely to encourage dialogue.

7) Motivate Patients

Efficaciously counseling not only provides patients with the pertinent information they need to use their medication correctly, it also guides them to adhere to their medication regimens. Pharmacists can motivate patients by discussing the advantages of medication adherence, offering support, and explaining the pros and cons of medication. Pharmacists also can give advice to facilitate patient adherence. Information always should be imparted positively, and pharmacists should look continually for ways to aspire patients to learn more about their treatment plan.

8) Show Empathy and Encouragement

When a pharmacist shows sympathy and consolation, a patient may feel more safe and comfortable discussing his or her medical condition and medication use, thus allowing the pharmacist to obtain appropriate information on the patient's needs and concerns. Highlighting to patients the value of constancy to medication regimens can benefit positive therapeutic outcomes and motivate patients to take an effective role in the management of their health. During counseling, pharmacists also should remind patients to call the pharmacy or their physician with any matters about their medications.

9) Provide Privacy and Confidentiality

Assuring complete privacy and confidentiality helps enable patients to feel complacent discussing personal medical

issues. Today many pharmacies are armed with special counseling areas to address privacy issues. When counseling, pharmacists can convince patients of privacy by monitoring voice levels and counseling patients away from the dispensing area when possible.

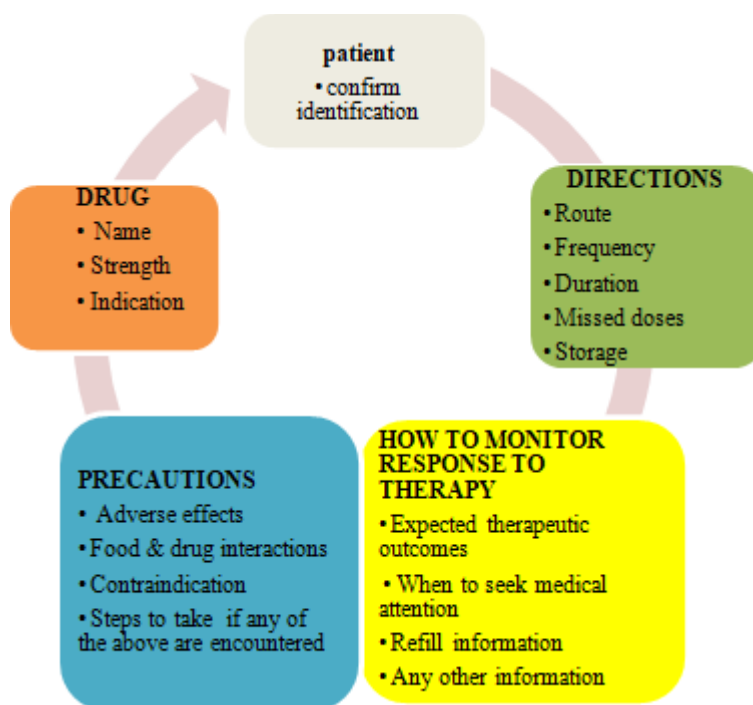
10) Tailor counseling to meet Patient Needs

The ability to modify patient counseling to meet individual needs is critical. Pharmacists should be aware of patients with disabilities and be framed to treat them with respect and understanding. Techniques should be modified to accommodate the needs of each patient via verbal counseling or the use of visual aids and demonstrations when needed. If the medication therapy includes some administration techniques, pharmacists should demonstrate the proper techniques to ensure that patients are enough trained.

2. Conclusion

Counseling never means Giving advice, or being Judgmental or Attempting to sort out the problems of the client or Getting emotionally involved with the client¹⁰.

Throughout the course of a pharmacist's busy day, it is impossible to advice every patient. While the use of written counseling information can be beneficial, it does not replace the interaction between the pharmacist and the patient. Pharmacists should seize every opportunity to counsel patients about their treatment regimens and ensure that patients clearly understand the proper use of their medication. Creating caring relationships motivates patients to seek counsel, thus increasing the probability of positive therapeutic outcomes. Every time a pharmacist takes the chance to counsel patients, he or she empowers patients with the information necessary to impact the quality and standard of their health⁵.



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