Boston Medical Center: Scripting

Problem to Be Resolved:

 Patients feeling they do not receive enough attention **Hospital:** Boston Medical Center

Location: One Boston Medical Center Place

Boston, MA 02118

Category:

Communication/IT

Key Words:

- Scripting
- Patient Satisfaction
- Customer Service
- Communication

Hospital Metrics:

(Taken from the FY2005 AHA Annual Survey)

2005 ED Volume: 124,447Hospital Beds: 624

Ownership: Not-for-profit

Trauma level: 1Teaching status: Yes

Tools Provided:

None

Strategy Description

This strategy improves communication between hospital employees in the emergency department (ED) and patients by using scripts. All hospital employees in the ED were given scripts to use with patients, so that each patient received the same high level of communication and care from each hospital employee.

The Impetus for Change

Seeing 121,000 patients per year, the Boston Medical Center ED is very busy. As a result, communication between staff and patients seemed to be suffering. Patients were happy with their care but less satisfied with their communication with staff about their care. The ED was eager to provide the additional patient attention needed to improve overall satisfaction.

Buy-In and Implementation

An executive committee that included the department chair, vice chair, nurse manager, assistant nurse managers, and others met to discuss the concept of **scripting** to improve customer service. According to ED Vice Dr. Chair Niels Rathlev, the committee looked at the results of patient satisfaction surveys and the four or five areas where they felt they could make the greatest impact.

The committee developed scripts that were implemented for all staff to help improve communication with patients. To confirm that the scripts were being used, management double checked with a few patients during administrative rounds. The scripts promoted a higher level of standardized patient care.

Lessons Learned

Some staff felt that by implementing scripting, the department was telling them how to be "nice" artificially. It was important not to try to change everyone's behavior all at once. It was also important that there were champions for the change (i.e., staff who believed in the concept and promoted its use).



Impact Satisfaction scores have not changed yet, but the practice is still in its early stages. The department has found that management rounds are essential to get a first-hand view of patient satisfaction. This document is copyrighted to Urgent Matters or its original author. No copies or duplication outside the Urgent Matters project is authorized without express written permission.

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