

10 TIPS FOR A GOOD DOCTOR-PATIENT RELATIONSHIP.

The Relationship between the doctor and the patient is a very delicate one. Though in business terms it is a buyer seller relationship, it has got far more implications to it than just give and take. It is more of a seeker and a giver relationship. The important aspect to emphasize is that the patient isn't aware of what is happening to him and that is why he has come to the doctor for help. So when you treat a patient it is very obvious that there is an emotional connect.

There is a lot of content on the web on this subject matter and you too may have followed the same path to reach to this article. So why write this article when there is already so much information available? While I am in medical documentation the tips noted below are a compilation of the stories that I have heard from numerous doctors who use our documentation for their medical practice. So here goes.

1. Always be Empathic towards the patient.

As I mentioned above it is a giver seeker relationship. The patient has come to you for help and he could have gone the doctor in the next lane but he chose you, so respect his choice because his choice is you. So always treat a patient as if you are treating yourself that is with empathy, respect & truthfulness.

2. Don't rush to write the documents.

(In case of emergency) It is always advisable to get the documents filled by the relative simultaneously when the patient is being given primary treatment. It is important that someone in the hospital is continuously interacting with the relatives and gets the documents filled. This will help in emergency, as no one can later blame you for not attending the patient and finishing the paperwork first.

3. If it is bad news, fill all your documents.

If you have bad news to tell the patient's relatives, you should first complete your documents. You can even ask for advice from a colleague if needed to check your

documents to be thorough. Always ask a staff member to stand by your side when you convey the message to the relatives.

4. When in Doubt call the police.

Even if you have a slightest of doubts about the condition of the patient, call the police. Have them by your side when you interact with the patient's relatives. This always has a calming effect on you while talking to the patient/relatives, especially the violent ones!

5. What you say, document it, sign it, update the patient, repeat.

This is a simple cycle that you need to follow to streamline your communication with the patient. A patient staying for a prolonged time at the hospital is going to have ups and downs. It is simpler to explain when you have the documents on your side. Keeping the relative updated reduces shocks if the patient does become serious.

6. Get consent for everything.

Consent is the mother of all communication. A consent is a unilateral agreement for the patient towards a doctor. There is already a lot of content around as to how a consent should be, but I have tried to sum up the main points that you need to have in a consent.

- a) Consent should cover all risks which may take place.
- b) Consent should be read and signed by the patient / relative.
- c) It should be stored with utmost care.

7. Staff should never give advice

Your staff is the doctor's extension but never should they give advice to the patient. A patient believes everything that comes from the hospital staff and it can be very wrong. The staff can be helpful but when in doubt always ask the doctor.

8. Be a phone call away.

Availability is the key for emergency treatment. If attending doctor is not available he/she should appoint another doctor and hand over the charge and make the

patient aware of the substitute. Never leave a patient when he cannot communicate with you.

9. Have good Signage.

For a patient the hospital is a home till he recovers and visual communications helps the patient to move freely in the hospital. Good signage helps patient to be more independent and reduces his dependency on the staff. Signage not only includes indicative signages but also information signage, which include Rules and regulations of the hospital, medico legal mandatory displays (ie. display mandatory by PCPNDT Act) etc.

10. Always Smile.

This is the last tip but very important one. A small smile can boost the confidence of a patient. I know it is very difficult to ask this in the stressful environment that doctors operate in but it does help a lot. You set a positive tone in the whole hospital.