Creating and Sustaining a Culture of Caring and Engagement

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Mission: Spencer Hospital is Dedicated to Promoting Healthier Lives.

Facilities
- Hospital
- Abben Cancer Center
- Warner Dialysis Centers
- Surgery Center
- Family Care Clinics in Milford and Sioux Rapids

A Typical Day
- Inpatient Census: 30
- Outpatient Registrations: 95

People: 530 employees and 43 active medical staff
Session Purpose

Describe the nuts and bolts of the powerful, ongoing transformation process that resulted in:

- Breakthroughs on HCAHPS
- More engaged and gratified employees
- A sustainable culture of caring and engagement.
Agenda

- The situation: Why this? Why now?
- Strategy steps to engage everyone and align accountability, communication, measurement, recognition and incentives to expedite transformation
- Results
- Tactics to ensure sustainability
The Situation: Why this? Why now?

- Decline in patient satisfaction scores
- Unable to come up with magic bullet
- Looking for something “New” and “Sustainable”
PRE-PLANNING

- Discovered Language of Caring program in an issue of the *HeartBeat* newsletter
- Phone consult with Jill Golde, Partner
- Networked with other facilities using the Language of Caring
- Developed a business case
- Sold this as a *culture change* rather than another program initiative or improvement project
BUSINESS CASE
What We Wanted to Achieve

- A reputation for not only great care but great **caring**
- Heightened performance on HCAHPS/Press Ganey
- Employee satisfaction and retention
- A stronger position as provider of choice in a competitive healthcare marketplace
BUSINESS CASE
(continued)

- Reconnection to the caring mission that led employees into healthcare
- Improved teamwork
- Pride in making a significant difference for patients during a vulnerable time
There is a lot of talk about culture & engagement these days:

- How would you describe your organization's culture?
- How satisfied are you with your organization’s culture? With staff engagement?
- What are you doing to strengthen and/or change it?
Jill Golde on “What is the Language of Caring”
Two Approaches to Strengthening Performance on CAHPS

SHOTGUN

BOWLING
Caring ≠ Communicating Caring

- Caring is a given, but communicating caring is not.
- It’s about conversations, connections and common language.
- Language of Caring helps YOU make sure they feel CARED ABOUT, as well as CARED FOR!
Two Programs

Language of Caring
FOR STAFF
COMMUNICATION ESSENTIALS
FOR A CULTURE OF CARING

Language of Caring
FOR PHYSICIANS
COMMUNICATION ESSENTIALS
FOR PATIENT-CENTERED CARE
Language of Caring enables organizations to

- **Strengthen communication skills** that increase empathy and compassion, and reduce anxiety
- **Focus** on helping caring staff COMMUNICATE their caring
- **Respect** time constraints with brief, digestible 30-minute skill modules
- **Enhance** colleague communication and relationships
- **Achieve** a sustainable culture of caring
Heart-Head-Heart Communication
Situation: (Patient to Caregiver)
“I’m in terrible pain. I want more medicine NOW!”

What is your first response?
Situation: (Patient to Caregiver)
“I’m in terrible pain. I want more medicine NOW!”

Head Responses:
• “How would you rate your pain from 1 to 10?”
• “You can have more medicine in 20 minutes.”
• “Where is your pain exactly?”
• “I’ll check with the doctor to see if there’s some other medicine that might work better.”

Heart Responses:
• “I’m so sorry you’re in pain!”
• “It must be very hard for you.”
• “I want to help you so you can feel comfortable.”
The Ideal: Heart-Head-Heart Communication

“I’m in terrible pain. I want more medicine NOW!”

“I’m so sorry you’re in pain. I want to help.”

“Let me talk to the doctor and see if there is something that might work better for you.”

“I really want to ease your pain.”
Language of Caring: **Skills** for Communicating with HEART

- Skill modules for teams—with interaction, video and habit-building
- Evidence-based best communication practices
  1. The Practice of Presence
  2. Acknowledging Feelings
  3. Showing Caring Nonverbally
  4. Explaining Positive Intent
  5. The Blameless Apology
  6. The Gift of Appreciation
  7. Say It Again with HEART
  8. Language of Caring: From Good to GREAT
Back to Brenda!
The Spencer Story
INITIAL STEPS

- Business plan approval

- Created *The Language of Caring Guides* (TLC’s/DIVAS 😊) to lead project
  - Directors from Med/Surg, Lab, Materials, and VP of Patient Care
  - Responsible for program lay-out
  - Support/guide/motivate
  - Set goals and targets to measure
INITIAL STEPS (continued)

- Color Teams
  - green, blue, orange, red

  - TLC Guides facilitated color teams
  - Met month after hardwiring
  - Support for directors: What went well, where opportunities are
  - Shared stories
LEADERSHIP KICKOFF

- Opening message from CEO
- Session for leadership at all levels (administration, directors, assistants, supervisors)
- Ann Fitzgerald from Language of Caring led kickoff
- Divided into color teams
- Binders for turnkey implementation
STAFF KICKOFF

- CEO held open forums for all staff
  - Message: Culture change, not an initiative
  - Expectations going forward
  - Right thing to do
  - Used at all levels with all customers
18 MONTH ROLLOUT PLAN

Learning module with video every other month

- One month to watch
- Assigned through Healthstream
- Mandatory

Hardwiring for a month after the team session

- Unit meetings
- Interdepartmental
- Community Calendar
GOALS/TARGETS

- Press Ganey and HCAHPS questions
- Measure rolling 12 month and rolling 3 month scores
- Chose incremental “Milestones”
Survey Questions

- Composite Overall (Inpatient, Outpatient, ED, Ambulatory Surgery)
- Likelihood of Recommending
- Nurses Listened Carefully to Me
- Explanation of Tests and Treatments
- Staff Addressed your Emotional Needs
- Staff Worked Together to Care For You
TOOLS
TOOLS
## HIRING QUESTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Co-worker/Conflict</th>
<th>LOC Indicators (Circle appropriate)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Tell me about a specific time when you felt frustrated by a coworker.  
  - Background?  
  - What they did?  
  - How you felt  
  - How you reacted?  
  - Response?  
  - Result? | Describe irritation clearly?  
  Composure?  
  Coworker directly vs. behind back?  
  Handled professionally? |
| Tell me about a time when a customer was very upset and complained to you.  
  - Background?  
  - What you said?  
  - How they responded?  
  - How you felt about the result? | Thanked customer for speaking up?  
  Encouraged customer to talk?  
  Listened non-defensively?  
  Acknowledged feelings?  
  Offered sincere, blameless apology?  
  Expressed Empathy?  
  Explained Positive Intent?  
  Offered options?  
  Followed through? |
DRIVING THE CULTURE

- Personal stories for weekly newsletter
- Department director meeting agenda
- Tied to bonus incentive program
- Job descriptions
- Standards of Performance
- Annual evaluation
- Question on biannual employee opinion survey
- Speaking engagements
- Included in job ads
ORIENTATION PLAN

- First day 10 minutes
- Catch up hardwiring sessions
  - Held quarterly
  - Facilitated by TLC Guides
  - 3 skills per session
PROGRESS
“I truly experienced the Language of Caring during my recent hospital stay. I was a patient here 3 years ago and received very good care but have to say this stay was “above and beyond” my last experience because of the warm, caring communication displayed. I really feel the Language of Caring has greatly influenced our staff and is making a difference.”
PROGRESS

“One example that impressed me the most was to hear every nurse or aide STOP and turn towards me and ASK before they left the room each time if there was anything else they could do for me along with a sincere thank you and smile. This was displayed by night and day by shift nurses as well as aides. That was so comforting and reassuring to know how much they care about you and want to take the time for you. These warm communication skills really do make a difference to the patient!”
LESSONS LEARNED

- Always will be some pushback
- Be clear about responsibility of directors
- Make program as turnkey as possible
- Challenge staff to make it fun
- Interdepartmental hardwiring helpful
- Involve non-clinical areas
- Use in e-mails for practice
- Seek out personal stories
BIGGEST LESSON LEARNED

MUST START AT TOP OF ORGANIZATION
Composite Overall Score (IP, OP, ED, AS)
Rolling 12-Month Percentile Rank
Composite Overall Score (IP, OP, ED, AS) Rolling 12-Month Percentile Rank
Composite Overall Score (IP, OP, ED, AS)
Rolling 12-Month Percentile Rank

- Composite Overall
- 1st Milestone - Composite
How well staff worked together to care for you
(rolling 12-mo. composite percentile rank)

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Composite 12-Mo. % Rank</th>
<th>Goal</th>
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<td>Nov13</td>
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</tr>
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### Frequency Distribution

#### Nov-14 IP

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<tr>
<th>Overall Rating</th>
<th>Nov-14 IP</th>
<th>Oct-14 IP</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>64.3%</td>
<td>63.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Poor</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
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#### Nov-14 AS

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<td>77.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>83.0%</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
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<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
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  - Poor: 1.2%
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ROUND TWO

- 3 month break - dip in scores
- Needed to spice up program
  - Poster contest
  - Hardwiring games facilitated by staff
  - New videos
JEOPARDY!
Employee Opinion Survey Comments

- "Waste of time"
- "Management role modeling LOC?"
- "Too much time on games not enough time on lesson"
- "I very much enjoy the language of caring program. Even though I felt I know all the major principles, it is nice to revisit them and learn new ways to apply them. I find this helps me in EVERY facet of my life. A GREAT program."
Round Three

- Quarterly one hour habit building sessions = more skills less frequent

- New employee orientation simplified

- Facilitated by management
HOMERUN

- Culture has changed; it FEELS different! CARING and ENGAGEMENT!
- Raised the bar
- Ownership and accountability
- Right people on the bus
Take Aways

- What have you heard that reinforces or validates what you are already doing?
- What ideas or “to dos” are you taking away from this presentation?
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