Optimizing Speech and Language Services in a Global Marketplace

Mayo Clinic

- Rochester, MN; Scottsdale AZ; Jacksonville FL
- Mayo Clinic Healthcare System
- International Network
  - 40 members in the US, China, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Singapore, United Arab Emirates, and the Philippines representing around 100 hospitals worldwide
  - 11.5 million patients and care teams can access Mayo clinic expertise, clinical protocols and consultations via our Connected Care platform.

- In the U.S. Mayo Clinic locations alone
  - 1.2 million patients annually
    - All 50 states
    - 135 countries

Exception, not the norm

- Globalization of healthcare cannot be denied
- Our country alone offers amazing cultural and linguistic diversity
- Myriad of cultures represented by our patients
- Global representation within providers
- Above all... when considering the provision of services we provide

THE NEEDS OF THE PATIENT COME FIRST
**Communication**

Effective communication is a critical element for providing quality health care. This is “what we do” as communication specialists.

- Gather information regarding symptoms
- Assess abilities
- Interpret results
- Offer a communication diagnosis, recommendations and treatment

**Challenges**

- During the majority of our daily interactions communication is unimpeded
  - Can be more difficult when emotions and or expectations run high
    - Even when optimal communication factors are present
- Medical setting
  - Inpatient
  - Outpatient
- Patient factors
  - Pediatric
  - Vulnerable
  - Young adult
- Cultural and/or linguistic differences
  - Add an additional layer of complexity

**Culture**

- Constellation of similar practices and beliefs
  - Economic
  - Social
  - Political
- These factors among groups influence attitudes, perception and behavior.
  - Ethnicity
• Race
• Nationality
• Religion
• Regionalism
• Family
• Groups
  • Professional
  • Recreational

Communication breakdown and health literacy

• Miscommunication can occur secondary to language barriers
  • Language difference
  • Terminology

• May not be specific to language
  • Beliefs
  • Values

• Patients and providers view words and actions through different eyes.
  • Varied backgrounds and experience

Understanding and Reflecting on Bias

• Perhaps the most important practice that we can offer our patients is the self examination of our own biases.

• Bias
  • Bias is an inclination in favor of or against an idea or thing, often in a manner that is closed-minded, prejudicial, or unfair.
    • Explicit bias: Attitudes and beliefs a person, group, belief on a
conscious level.

- Implicit bias: Attitudes or stereotypes that influence our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner.

- Reflection on the presence of bias
  - No one wants to admit they hold unconscious biases
  - Admitting that potential may be the most important step we can make for our patients

Self-assessment

- Implicit Association Test
  - A method for examining subconscious beliefs
    - https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/

- ASHA Cultural Competence Self Assessment Tool
  - https://www.asha.org/practice/multicultural/self/

- Awareness of your own natural inclinations may offer benefit in the provision of service across the scope of our practice
  - Knowing the potential for biases can influence our behavior
  - Implicit and explicit bias coexist

Case history: Symptoms +

- In cultural and linguistically diverse patients it is important to learn as much as possible about potential influences outside of current symptoms.

- General questions that are good to include:
  - More specific questions may be critical to reflect groups in your area/region.

- Where are you from?
  - Have you always lived there?
• What was your first language?
• How many languages do you speak?
• What is your primary language?

• Do you live with family?
• Does anyone or anything (beliefs) help you make decisions about healthcare?
• Tell me about your problem with communication
• What do you call it?
• What was the first thing you noticed that concerned you?
• Have others noticed difficulty?
• Have things changed since you first noticed a change?
• Are there things you can do to make it better?
  • Behavioral
  • Medicines
  • Food/drink

• Have you seen anyone else about these changes?
  • What were their impressions and/or suggestions?

• Are you able to receive services in your area?
  • Describe
    • To the layperson, SLP=SLP

• May have to dig with additional questions to clarify responses

• Confirm with family members
• Their reports may offer a more realistic clinical picture.

• Summarize to provide opportunities to correct misunderstandings.

Language barriers

• When a language barrier exists, assistance with interpreter services may be necessary.
  
  • Our most common language barrier is when interacting with patients with limited English proficiency (LEP).

  • Trained medical interpreters
    • Work most efficiently for accurate translation between provider and patient

  • Alternatives
    • Family members
    • Untrained staff with language proficiency
    • Providers with limited proficiency

  • May have unforeseen consequences...

Federal Regulations

• Require all covered health care programs and providers to take “reasonable steps to provide meaningful access to each individual with limited English proficiency eligible to be served or likely to be encountered in its health programs and activities.”

• Language assistance services must be free to patients, accurate and timely, protect patient confidentiality, and be provided by qualified interpreters.

Myriad of services

• Telephone

• Video Remote services
In-person services

Language services: Interpreters

• In working with Interpreters, allow extra time for the consultation
  • Prior to the appointment/interaction
    • Explain your goals/expectations
    • Explain what is needed
    • Inquire how to address client/patients
  • During the appointment/interaction
    • Speak directly to the patient
    • One question/statement at a time
    • Summarize the interaction
  • After the appointment/interaction
    • Discuss and sensitive issues that may have arisen
    • All interactions are learning opportunities

Benefits

• Health care delivery that involves professional medical interpreters provides a variety of benefits.

• Better health outcomes,

• Ethical patient care,

• Improved patient satisfaction,

• Will likely reduce repeat visits by patients who have experienced miscommunication in their interactions with providers.
Patients, families, guardians

- The person or person(s) you meet during the interaction may differ across cultures
  - Roles also vary according to culture
    - Deference to parents
    - Religious leaders
    - Children
  - This shouldn’t change the information you offer, but it may alter how you address the patient vs. group in the room

However, the patient is your priority

Take advantage of your resources

- There are likely more than you realize
  - ASHA - https://www.asha.org/practice/multicultural/
  - Workplace – Diversity and Inclusion
  - Community
  - Family members or friends
    - May be as good or better than other alternatives

REFERENCES


