

Communication Skills in the Workplace

Course/Duty Area: Medical Administration/ Developing Communication Skills

Scenario: You are an employee at a small local medical practice. A patient calls the practice to schedule an appointment. They are scared and mistrustful of the healthcare system as they had a negative experience with a different practice. They ask many clarifying questions that take up a lot of your time. This patient may be reluctant to provide information such as health insurance details, either because they don't understand how to and/or don't trust the practice yet. The practice requires the insurance information; otherwise, the patient will get charged for the appointment.

Big Question: How would you assist this patient to ensure they get the care they need?

Focused Questions:

- How would you conduct your voice over the phone for this patient?
- How would you navigate the information gathering process with this patient?
- If you had someone come into the waiting area, how would you handle the patient on the phone along with the patient in the waiting room?
- If during the phone call the patient becomes angry, what are some steps to take to deescalate the situation? At what point do you ask for assistance from other staff in the practice?

Student Project or Outcome: Students will role play and walk through proper phone etiquette and de-escalation strategies. They will apply cultural competency strategies.

Project-Based Assessment: Ask students to offer peer feedback to evaluate whether each student demonstrated effective communication and customer service skills. A rubric could be used for peer evaluation.

Scenario submitted by Kristen Dahlman, Virginia Community Action Partnership