COLLEEN SWEENEY, RN, BS
THE PATIENT EMPATHY PROJECT – WHAT PATIENTS FEAR AND WHY HOSPITALS HAVE TO KNOW

Colleen Sweeney is founder of Sweeney Healthcare Enterprises. As a nurse and former Director of Innovation, Ambassador and Customer Services at Memorial Hospital of South Bend, Colleen conducted a three year project titled, The Patient Empathy Project.

In her work she has identified the top 11 patient fears and how addressing those fears can be the key to patient compliance and loyalty. Knowing that 96% of all patients have serious concerns or fears about their hospitalization that need to be addressed can be transformational for both the patient and the culture of an organization. Prepare to be changed.
The Patient Empathy Project—What Patients Fear and Why Hospitals Have to Know
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“Service is simple. It’s just not easy.”

—a quote from anyone who’s tried to deliver it
We teach people how to treat us.
What if everyone has some fear that they aren’t telling us about?
It all started with one patient...

The Patient Empathy Project was born.
Clinicaphobia is a fear of hospitals, healthcare and doctors.
Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

- Physiological
  - (Food, H₂O, O₂, Body Temp, Sleep)

- Safety & Security
  - (Threatening Situations)

- Social
  - (Love, Affection, Belonging)

- Esteem
  - (Respect from Others)

- Self-Actualization

- Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
Hierarchy of Patient Needs

The Exceptional Experience

Individualized Care, Respect, Courtesy

Response to Call Lights, Visiting Hours, Family Needs, Listen

Proper ID, Right Procedure, Right Meds, Reassurance, Fears/Concerns, Explain

Bed, Nutrition, Rest, Cleanliness, Temperature Control, Pain Control
Hierarchy of Patient Needs

- Bed, Nutrition, Rest, Cleanliness
- Temperature Control, Pain Control
- Proper ID, Right Procedure, Right Meds, Reassurance, Fears/Concerns, Explain
- Response to Call Lights, Visiting Hours, Family Needs, Listen
- Individualized Care, Respect, Courtesy
- The Exceptional Experience
- HCAHPS
  - 85 - 100
  - 70 - 85
  - 50 - 70
  - 25 - 50
  - 10 - 25

Scores:
- 85 - 100
- 70 - 85
- 50 - 70
- 25 - 50
- 10 - 25

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Why we have to know

- 96% of all people suffer from it.
- Signs and symptoms: breathlessness, excessive sweating, nausea, dry mouth, feeling sick, heart palpitations, a fear of dying, becoming mad or losing control, full blown anxiety attack, and the inability to think clearly.
- It is often unspoken and shameful
HITTING THE TARGET

- MISSING THE MARK

- Patient Fears/Concerns
- DR Communicates Well
- Bathroom Clean
- Quiet at Night
- Receive Help Promptly
- Respond to Call Lights
- Explains Meds
- Nurses Communicate Well

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I hate to see that sign because my parents died there.
Everything matters.
Everything we say matters.
Everything we do matters.
Everyone is watching.
Everyone is listening.
I'm afraid they're going to misdiagnose me...

It's just a cold.
GHOSTS
FROM
DEAD
PATIENTS

HOSPITAL
Now I know why they call it ICU!
does he even care?

BLAH BLAH BLAH...
It makes me sweat when you are writing - why don’t you show me what you are writing about ME!
whenever i get tested for AIDS, most of me dreads the idea of being positive but part of me thinks it'd be nice to not have to care anymore.
Leaving foreign bodies after surgery
being alone
The Patient Empathy Project
Top 11 Fears

1. Infection
2. Incompetence
3. Death
4. Cost
5. Medical Mix-up
6. Needles
7. Rude doctors and nurses
8. Germs
9. Diagnosis/prognosis
10. Communication Issues
11. Loneliness
Everything matters.
Ninety-ninth percentile organizations have ninety-ninth percentile leaders.
You know you are a 99%ile healthcare leader when you...

• pick up trash daily
• constantly chat up other departments & people
• say hello to EVERYONE
• are the employee you want your employees to be
• know employee names
• park far away
• hire for talent
• obsess about recognition
• are addicted to a positive attitude
• don’t run in a posse
• gently call out those not living up to your values
• are seen in patient care areas other than during a sentinel event
You know you are a 99%ile healthcare leader when you...

- get invited to department meetings
- give everyone your home phone #
- are visible
- walk people where they have to go
- cast the vision daily
- encourage friendships among employees
- love your employees
- save BlackBerry-checking for later
- bring your fun to work!!!!!
Thank you for all you do.

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