

Communication with Professionals

Statement of Best Practice

Communication between Professionals, takes place in an appropriate manner that respects each other's knowledge and skills.

Introduction

Communication can be defined as:

'a process that involves a meaningful exchange between at least two people to convey facts, needs, opinions, thoughts, feelings or other information through both verbal and non-verbal means, including face-to-face exchanges and the written word' Essence of Care (2010)

Communication & Critical Care

- A wide variety of communication skills are integral to good critical care practice.
- Communication is central to successful caring relationship and to effective team working.
- Listening is equally as important to ensure there is comprehensive understanding of the situation
- Respect for each other is imperative for cohesive working.
- Documentation is paramount to ensure transfer of information is fluid and patient treatment/care is appropriate, timely and clear.

Communication syllabus in Critical Care (Gauntlett & Laws, 2008)

Skill	Example
Crisis communication	Acting as a team leader and directing colleagues in a clinical emergency
Inter-professional discussions	Dealing with disagreement between clinical teams about treatment options
Communication with patients	Focused history taking in a compromised patient
Family meetings	Explanation of critical care interventions and honest discussion of prognosis
Clinical updates	Modifying expectations
End of Life issues	Negotiating agreement on a withdrawal of treatment plan

Education and Training

- All staff should receive appropriate communication skills education and training on the Trust Induction when they commence employment in the organisation.
- All staff should receive communication skills training to demonstrate competence in accordance with local trust policies.
- All staff should have an annual appraisal as part of their on-going professional development.
- All staff should complete the Information Governance module as part of the mandatory training annual update. Eg. Record keeping, confidentiality, documentation.
- A clear record should be documented of all aspects of communication (healthcare records/diaries).

References

Critical Care National Network Nurse Lead (CC3N)

National Competency Framework for Adult Critical Care Nurses www.cc3n.org.uk

DH, (2010) Essence of Care. Benchmarks for communication. DH

DH, (2012) Compassion in Practice. Nursing Midwifery and Care Staff, Our Vision and Strategy. DH

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Gauntlett, R. and Laws, D. (2008) Communication skills in critical care. Continuing Education in Anaesthesia Critical Care & Pain. 8(4) pp.121-124

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