

PREFACE

Welcome to *Patient Communication for Pharmacy!* As the authors of this text, we would like to congratulate you on taking this very important step toward building communication competency, which we believe is a highly necessary skill for pharmacists. Every day that you interact with patients, colleagues, and other healthcare providers, you are essentially using communication to positively influence someone's life. In this Preface, we hope to orient you toward the key features of this text in order to prepare you for this very exciting journey towards becoming more competent in your communication.

A COMMUNICATION SKILLS APPROACH

We believe that an abstract understanding of communication can be taught through principles and theories, but applicable communication skills must be learned through practice, reflection, and repetition. This text provides chapters that mesh theory, principles, and application all in one. Each chapter provides an introduction to important patient communication topics with theory and principles, followed by the opportunity for students to develop applicable communication skills through real patient case scenarios. By focusing on communication skills, we hope to help students understand not only the *what* and *why* of patient communication, but also provide them with the opportunity to learn the *how* of using communication to improve patient care.

A FOCUS ON PATIENT-CENTERED CARE

Patient-centered care is illustrated throughout this book. The American Pharmacists Association (APhA) defines *pharmaceutical care* as “a patient-centered, outcomes-oriented pharmacy practice that requires the pharmacist to work in concert with the patient and the patient’s other healthcare providers” (n.d., p.1). It further identifies five practices that are key to delivering patient-centered care, including:

- 1) data collection,
- 2) information evaluation,
- 3) formulating a plan,
- 4) implementing the plan,
- 5) monitoring and modifying the plan and assuring positive outcome.

The success of each practice depends on the pharmacist’s communication. Practices 1 and 4, for example, revolve mostly around the patient and quality communication is of the utmost importance. When formulating a plan or modifying it, the pharmacist should work with other healthcare providers as well as communicate the plan effectively to patients.

The pharmacy profession has fully embraced its departure from the dispensing role to one of patient-centered care at its core, and communication is a must-have tool for pharmacists in order to fulfill this role. While pharmacists may find themselves communicating in different contexts—including in small groups, to a general public, or via different media outlets—this text focuses primarily on the interpersonal communication dynamics between pharmacists and their patients. Successful communication is the only way to understand one’s patients, win their trust, engage them in self-care behavior, and ultimately achieve patient care goals.

A MODEL OF REPETITION THROUGH THE LEARN, PRACTICE, AND ASSESS CASE APPROACHES

The LEARN, PRACTICE, and ASSESS patient cases at the end of each chapter are designed to help students hone communication skills through repetition.

96 CHAPTER 8 Communicating with Patients with Low Health Literacy

LEARN, PRACTICE, AND ASSESS ● ▲ ■

CASE STUDY EXERCISES

LEARN: Example Patient Dialogues

Directions: Read the following case study. After completing Patient Dialogue One and Patient Dialogue Two, consider the differences between them and answer the questions provided.

PATIENT CASE

Cathy Myers, a well-dressed 67-year-old Caucasian female, presents to her community pharmacy in the high-end part of town, where she has been going for the past 11 years. She often comes into the pharmacy with her grandson and usually is in a rush to get her prescription and leave. She was recently diagnosed with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and was instructed by her physician to obtain an influenza and pneumococcal vaccination at her local pharmacy, instead of at her doctor's office. She is a homemaker who homeschooled her kids and is now helping to take care of her 4-year-old grandson 3 days a week.

- Past medical history:
 - COPD (diagnosed 1 month ago)
 - Hypertension x 20 years
 - Osteoporosis x 1 year
 - Postmenopausal x 15 years
- Current medications:
 - HCTZ 25 mg 1 tablet po daily
 - Boniva 150 mg 1 tablet po monthly
 - Spiriva 18 mg 1 inhalation po daily
 - Albuterol inhaler prn SOB

PATIENT DIALOGUE ONE

Pharmacist: Hello, Mrs. Myers. Hi there, Caleb. How was your Thanksgiving?

Patient: Hi, Janet. We had a great time! All of my kids were able to come home this year. We had about 20 people over, including all of the grandkids and spouses. It was the first time everyone has been home in about 3 years. *(Caleb starts walking toward the OTC aisles picking up medications.)* Caleb, come back over here.

Pharmacist: That's great! How can I help you today?

Patient: My doctor told me that I can start to get my flu shot done here. I didn't know you all can give flu shots now.

The LEARN section includes a patient case and two patient dialogue scenarios, one that features an ineffective patient dialogue related to the case, followed by an improved, more appropriate communication during the pharmacist–patient interactions. Instructors can use the discussion questions to invoke class discussion on the differences between the two dialogues and to help students make the connection between concepts in the chapters and the dialogues, while observing how patient communication makes a difference in patient outcomes.

LEARN, PRACTICE, AND ASSESS

CASE STUDY EXERCISES

PRACTICE: Build Your Own Dialogue

Directions: Now it is time to *practice* what you have learned about the topic of this chapter. Reflecting on concepts from this chapter and the patient dialogues in the LEARN exercise, develop your own pharmacist–patient dialogue using the following patient information and guidance questions.

PATIENT CASE

A 62-year-old African-American female presents to a free health clinic to order medication refills from a patient assistance program. She needs to reorder Benicar HCT 40/12.5 mg, Crestor 10 mg, and Lantus insulin 30 units. She is given some forms to complete for the patient assistance program and states that she has forgotten her glasses. She would like to take the forms home and bring them back the next day. The pharmacist comes into the medicine room to speak with the patient, who asks the pharmacist if she has time to talk about her medications. The pharmacist is happy to speak with her. The patient asks the pharmacist to help her fill out the patient assistance forms.

As you plan your dialogue, keep in mind what you have learned about communicating with low health literacy patients. Use the following questions to help plan and assess your dialogue.

1. An important part of planning a dialogue is setting goals for the conversation. Given the patient's situation, what would you like to accomplish in this dialogue? Be sure to think about both short- and long-term goals. For instance, you may want to inquire about her medication adherence, and find out whether she understands how to take her medications and whether she has any problems she wants to discuss.
2. However, an important long-term communication goal may be to help her become more comfortable with you, so that you two can openly discuss difficult topics, such as struggles with health literacy. Health literacy, it is important to recognize the potential signs because patients may not be willing to directly share their misunderstanding of health information or their inability to read. In your dialogue, be sure to plan verbal and nonverbal strategies to address this.
3. The patient seems comfortable asking the pharmacist for help with her medications. As a pharmacist, what can you do to encourage low health literacy patients to seek help from you? How can you make the patient feel more comfortable?
4. There are a variety of health literacy tools for pharmacists to use when educating patients. Which specific tools do you plan to use to educate and empower the low health literacy patient?

In the PRACTICE section, students apply what they have learned from the chapters and the LEARN dialogues by developing their own patient communication dialogue based on a provided patient case scenario. In this section, students are provided a set of guidance questions to ensure that they address key communication challenges and needs while designing the dialogue. Students transition from learning abstract concepts through observation to developing communication skills through guided application. Students can develop the PRACTICE dialogues in pairs or teams, and if possible, instructors should invite some students to role-play their dialogues. This can help facilitate a class discussion about the differences among the dialogues, and about the dynamic nature of pharmacy–patient communication.

Case Studies 101

LEARN, PRACTICE, AND ASSESS

● ▲ ■

CASE STUDY EXERCISES

■ ASSESS: Build Your Own Dialogue

Directions: Now it is time to assess what you have learned about the topic of this chapter. In this exercise, no guidance questions are provided. Reflect on what you have learned from the LEARN and PRACTICE exercises, and develop your own pharmacist–patient dialogue using the following patient information.

PATIENT CASE
 A mother comes to your pharmacy complaining that she has been giving her son medicine for his ear infection for the past 5 days and he seems to be getting fussier and pulling at his ear instead of getting better. You ask the mother to show you how she is administering the antibiotic (Amoxicillin) to her son using a dropper, and she demonstrates putting it in his ear.

The ASSESS section includes a final patient case scenario, and students are asked to create a communication dialogue based on what they have learned so far in the chapter. This section is designed to mimic real-life patient encounters, in which a pharmacist quickly gauges a patient’s needs and responds with the appropriate communication strategies. Instructors can use this section to assess what students have learned in the chapter and whether they can translate what they have learned into actual patient care behavior. Through this repetition of practice and reflection, we believe the students can hone their communication skills in an expedient manner.

ADDITIONAL KEY FEATURES

Key terms are clearly defined in the text where the term first appears to help enhance comprehension and expand students’ professional vocabulary.

End of Chapter Discussion Questions are intended to facilitate individual reflections or class discussions of each chapter’s materials after students have completed the reading and the LEARN PRACTICE ASSESS exercises. Instructors can use these questions when they assign reflective essays, or to facilitate further discussion in certain areas of patient communication.

FOR THE INSTRUCTOR

The **Test Bank** includes true/false questions and multiple-choice questions of varying difficulty levels to assess student learning. Instructors can use the questions to test the student’s recall of key information from the chapter, as well as assess their ability to apply these concepts in hypothetical scenarios.

Web Links of YouTube Videos provide two to three YouTube links that help illustrate concepts addressed in each chapter. A brief description of each video’s content, source, and its connection to the course concepts is included to help instructors navigate this resource.

Slides in PowerPoint format for each chapter provide a starting template of key concepts to discuss during class lectures.