

The Impact of Reflective Activities on Multidisciplinary Team Communication



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Background

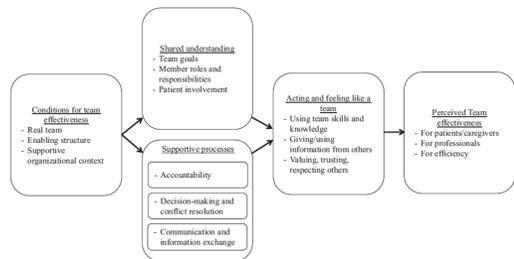
- A team-based approach in Family Medicine (FM) is now essential, as several of the Milestones contain team-based competencies.
- Communication is one of the most important aspects of patient-centered team-based practice.
- Group activities can raise awareness of communication problems, and reflection practices within teams can improve communication.

Objective

To determine if the implementation of team reflective activities about communication can improve perceived team dynamics within a FM Residency setting.

Method

- 25 Providers, 14 Nurses/MAs, and 11 Staff Members from 4 multidisciplinary teams participated in 2 types of reflective activities (see below) over 6 months.
- Participants also completed the Primary Care Team Dynamics (PCTD) Survey¹ at the beginning and end of the study. Paired-Samples T-tests were conducted. Below is the conceptual model of the PCTD Survey.



Activity #1: Ball Toss Activity²

- Team members were tasked with tossing several tennis balls (representing patients) in a repeating pattern across a circle while loud music played.
- Written messages on paper plates (representing paperwork) and water balloons (representing gossip) were circulated during game play.
- Afterward, communication and teamwork challenges were discussed as a group, and participants completed a brief evaluation of the activity.

Activity #2: Two Reflection Questions

- At 2 separate meetings, team members wrote individual responses to reflection questions about communication and then discussed them as a group.
- Themes were identified from the written responses.

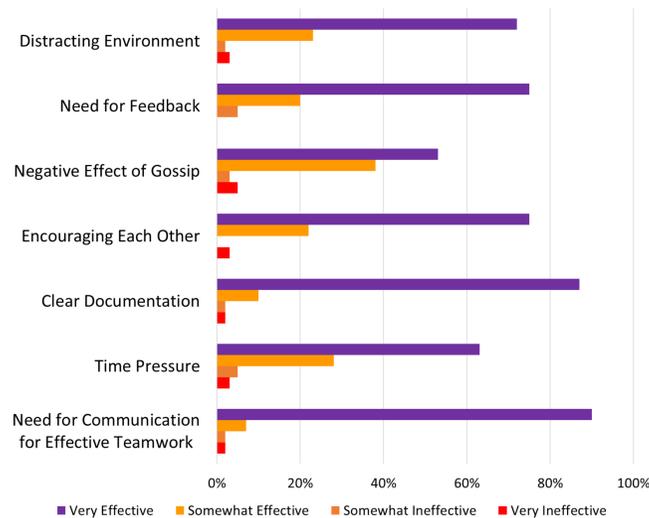
Results

Ball Toss Activity Evaluation

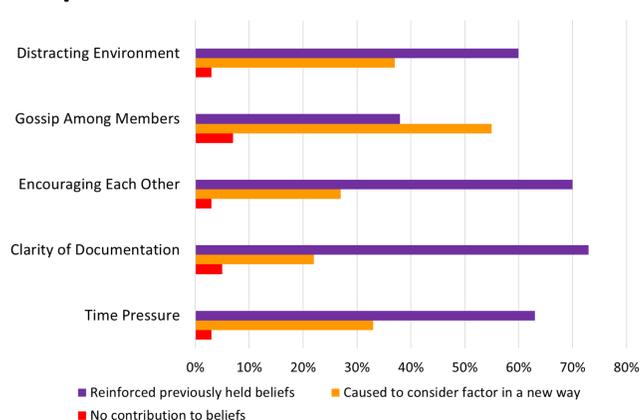


Tossing the "Gossip"

Effectiveness of activity at demonstrating Communication Factors



Influence on participants' beliefs about the impact of factors on team communication



Results

Reflection Question Themes

Question 1: What factors are necessary for good communication?

- Willingness to help and listen (approachability)
- Clear communication and articulation
- Non-judgmental feedback using a calm and friendly demeanor/ respectful tone of voice

"The fact that everyone was respectful of everyone's concerns...the relationship and environment played a big role in making open communication easy."

Question 2: How do you want to improve communication on your team?

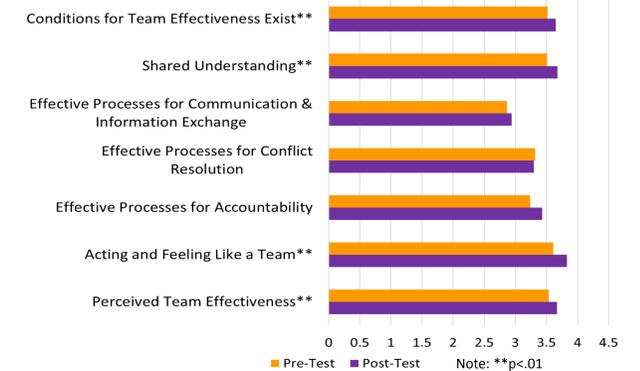
- Focus on improving team efficiency and patient care by giving timely, constructive feedback to team members and discussing issues openly with a positive, growth-oriented mindset.
- Improve transitions of care and work flow by communicating to other team members proactively about patient care needs, potential problems, and asking others what they need.
- Get to know team members better by speaking face-to-face and using team members' names.

"[Sometimes] I notice errors and I don't take the time to talk to the nurse/MA/ Front Desk about it...so nothing changes. I need to figure out how to take the time to [give feedback] when I see there is an issue."

Results

PCTD Survey

Comparison of Pre- and Post-Test Means



Conclusion

- The *Ball Toss Activity* is effective at demonstrating factors of communication, and it both reinforces participants' beliefs about communication and causes them to consider factors in new ways.
- Reflective activities can improve perception of some factors of team dynamics.
- Approachability of team members and clear communication were identified as necessary factors for good communication on teams.
- To improve communication further, our teams will create processes for conflict resolution and constructive feedback, cultivate proactive mindsets, and create more opportunities for direct, face-to-face communication.



Reading the "paperwork"

References

1. Song, H., Chien, A., Fisher, J., Martin, J., Peters, A., Hacker, K., Rosenthal, M., & Singer, S. (2015). Development and Validation of the Primary Care Team Dynamics Survey. *Health Services Research*, 50, 897-921.
2. Guerrero-Pavich, E. (2015). A Resident Retreat Model Using Play to Teach Behavioral Science Milestones. Workshop presented at the 36th Forum for Behavioral Science in Family Medicine, Chicago, IL.