



HOW DOES YOUR THERAPY PROVIDER INTERACT WITH NURSING?

A WHITE PAPER ABOUT INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAMWORK -

NURSING & THERAPY COLLABORATION

..... AUTUMN 2016

INTRODUCTION:

For those of us who work in healthcare, the stakes have never been higher. Our judgements, assessments, decisions, and actions have consequences that can put patients' health, and even their lives, at risk. For this reason, it is vital that we work as a well-functioning, coordinated, collaborative team during clinical practice.

The saying, "Two heads are better than one" is especially true for healthcare teams. Data shows that patient care works best when it is a concerted team effort between nurses, therapists, other medical staff, patients, families, and caregivers.

When "I" is
replaced with
"we," even
"illness" becomes
"wellness."

— Malcolm X

Interdisciplinary collaboration is good for patients and leads to ...

- Timely planning and preparation for discharge.
- Fewer medical complications.
- Decreased lengths of stay.
- Improved quality of life and higher levels of patient satisfaction.

Interdisciplinary collaboration is also good for team members and leads to...

- A sense of value and respect between nursing and therapy staff.
- More job satisfaction, improved staff retention, less tension, and a better work environment.

Better collaboration also strengthens reimbursement claims and reduces audit risks with comprehensive documentation that proves medical necessity of treatment.

Why is collaboration between nursing and therapy sometimes so difficult?

According to research, when nurses and therapists are asked, "What prevents you from effectively collaborating?" they typically cite the following reasons:

- a) Lack of time.
- b) Lack of training/knowledge of roles.
- c) Lack of continuity across care settings and providers.
- d) Communication problems and personality conflicts.
- e) All of the above!



TIPS TO ENHANCE THE NURSE / THERAPIST RELATIONSHIP

- 1** Appreciate that you have complementary skills that will improve your ability to provide care.
- 2** Respect diversity, and use differences in your experiences to work to the advantage of patients.
- 3** Strive to understand one another's roles, as well as educate each other about your own role.
- 4** Agree on a shared, patient-centered mission, and work together to help each patient meet treatment goals.
- 5** Learn each other's "language" and approach. For example, therapists may need to educate nursing staff members in proper definitions of and techniques for transfers, mobility, positioning, exercises, and ADLs.
- 6** Directly, honestly, and promptly share the concerns you have about patients.
- 7** Be empathetic to each other's schedules. Therapists see patients for designated times; nurses often work long hours and are the eyes and ears when patients are not in treatment.
- 8** Collaborate with each other regarding patient schedules.
- 9** Continually assess and improve upon your patient care process together.

HOW DOES THERAPY MANAGEMENT, INC. ENSURE COLLABORATION WITH NURSING?

Our goal is to establish a “culture of collaboration” with nursing teams and other staff at skilled nursing facilities. Our clients appreciate that we make a concerted effort with them to assess, plan, implement, and evaluate each patient’s care.

Here are our beliefs and best practices to ensure collaborative care:

- Knowledge from those in other disciplines enriches our own practice.
- Nursing observations & opinions are vital in understanding all dimensions of a case.
- Early detection of issues is key. Our team trains nurses in proper interventions, so if for example a nurse notices a patient has difficulty swallowing at 3 AM, she can initiate an intervention until our SLP can perform an assessment in the morning.
- Treatment plans should be multidisciplinary. Adding to the example above – our SLP would make recommendations on diet, postural changes, and strategies to maintain safety, so the nursing staff is ready to provide clinically appropriate care.
- Supportive management and ongoing training empowers our therapists.
- Our team members conduct interdisciplinary in-services for our clients with evidence-based information and case studies.
- Our therapists participate in team meetings, home evaluations, patient assessments, and triple check meetings (and our clients do not pay for those hours.)
- We work with nursing to coordinate medications, dressing changes, and other tasks that take extended time/effort, so therapy happens at the right time for patients.
- Lines of communication are open – between staff, facility, and our leadership team.
- We have a clear complaint resolution process.
- Interdisciplinary involvement happens with QA and clinical decisions, including planning and decision making for therapy minute delivery.
- We coordinate documentation between therapists and nurses to improve patient care, outcomes, and our clients’ performance measures.



THERAPY MANAGEMENT, INC.
Your Partner for Rehabilitation and Growth

**CONTACT US WITH YOUR QUESTIONS &
IDEAS ABOUT DEVELOPING A MORE
COLLABORATIVE REHABILITATION PROGRAM.**

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