

Huddle Up

Professionalism in the Dialysis Setting - Series #4

Do's and Don'ts: Words of Wisdom From The Patient Perspective

From a patient perspective, a professional is caring, empathetic, respectful, competent and trustworthy. How staff display these characteristics determines if patients believe staff are behaving professionally.

Patients have expectations for professional behavior based on their own life experiences, each coming to dialysis with their own set of health concerns, wants, needs and coping strategies. They look to the staff to provide compassionate and empathetic care which recognizes that each patient wants a hassle-free, pain-free experience. Patients do not want to feel like they are part of an assembly line, but are appreciated as individuals. Below is a listing of do's and don'ts for staff shared by patient experts related to staff professionalism in the dialysis setting.



DO'S	DON'TS
Be empathetic. Imagine yourself needing dialysis and think about how you would want to be treated if you were sitting in the dialysis chair.	Don't treat patients like they are less than you or that you are better than them or are doing them a favor by being their caregiver.
Try to see things from a patient perspective.	Don't focus on only your needs as the provider.
Sit down and talk with patients. Ask how you can help.	Don't assume you know what patients are going through or that they don't have any ideas about what their needs are.
Be respectful with your words and tone of voice. Be polite and consider patient privacy.	Don't talk down to patients, talk to them like a child, speak in a negative tone or raise your voice.
Listen to patients and ask questions to better understand what they are feeling and/or need.	Don't interrupt patients or multi-task while patients are trying to talk and explain something to you.
Involve patients in decisions about their care. Engage them in discussions, asking what they want for their care.	Don't tell patients what to do or make decisions for them without including them in a conversation about it.
Keep a positive attitude. Put your "bad day" on hold when you are caring for patients.	Don't let a bad attitude or a personal problem negatively affect how you treat patients.

DO'S	DON'TS
Understand that patients may be afraid. Be respectful of their decisions and ask questions to better understand their concerns and how you can make things better.	Don't take it personally if a patient wants someone else to stick them. Their access is their lifeline and no one wants to feel pain.
Be present when you are working with patients and respectful in how you treat them. This is their time today, right now.	Don't go on "auto-pilot" when providing care. Don't rush through what you are doing or be rough with patients.
Treat each patient like a person who has a life outside of dialysis, with feelings, hopes and dreams.	Don't treat patients like a number to be moved on from.
Address patient concerns and grievances, listen and ask questions to understand concerns in order to problem solve together.	Don't minimize or brush off patient concerns.
Follow all clinic guidelines for patient safety.	Don't get upset with patients if they ask you to wash your hands, change your gloves or wear your PPE.
Follow through. When you say you are going to do something, do it.	Don't make promises you cannot keep.
Be mindful that the conversations you have with other staff on the treatment floor are only related to the care being provided.	Don't talk about your personal or work-related problems in front of or with patients, it makes them concerned about how you may provide their care.
Stay attentive to your patients so that you can respond to their immediate needs.	Don't leave your assigned patients unattended.
Do your best to get your patients running on time.	Don't dismiss that a patient's time is less valuable than yours, recognize that getting on late impacts their day.
Help patients when they are done with treatment by folding their blanket or helping with their belongings.	Don't forget that it is the small things that make a big difference in showing how much you care.