

Chapter 4

Documentation and Communications

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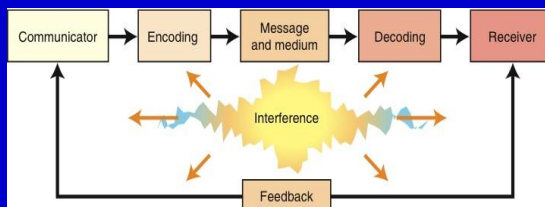
Introduction

- Nothing is more important to the success of an EMR as clear, concise, appropriate communication
 - Consider all communication that must take place to make the proper response happen
 - A single breakdown can have far-reaching effects
 - Effective communication is the cornerstone to an organized, safe, successful emergency response

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Communication



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Communication

- Many different definitions of the word "communication"
 - Any act by which one person gives to or receives from another person information about that person's needs, desires, perceptions, knowledge, or affective states
 - Everything you do, say, your tone of voice, your posture, and your appearance communicates a message to your patient
 - Every communication event starts with a sender, receiver, and message

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Communication

- Importance of effective communication
 - Interagency and intraagency communication
 - Must be clear communication within each agency
 - You cannot expect to effectively communicate with other agencies if you cannot communicate within your own
 - Before age of interoperability
 - Different agencies may have had different names for the same piece of equipment
 - Focus in today's emergency response environment; "using plain English" to avoid confusion

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Communication

- Importance of effective communication
 - Patient communication
 - Once you get to the scene of the emergency and gather necessary resources, it is time to communicate with the patient
 - As an EMR, you will be present at what may be the worst moments in your patient's life

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Communication

- Effective communication
 - To improve your ability to better understand verbal and nonverbal messages you receive, approach each patient encounter with empathy



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Communication

- Effective communication
 - Empathy
 - The ability to recognize, perceive, and feel directly the emotions of another
 - Begins with awareness of another person's feelings
 - It is easier to be aware of other people's emotions if they would tell us how they feel

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Communication

- Effective communication
 - Empathy
 - We can also show empathy through a simple sign of affection such as a gesture or a comforting touch
 - Be careful and sensitive to cultural differences in which a touch may be viewed as inappropriate or unacceptable
 - Usually used in reference to sensing someone else's painful feelings
 - It can also apply to someone's positive feelings of success, pride, or achievement

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Communication

- Effective communication
 - Sensitivity
 - As an EMR, you are expected to bring your sensitivity for the human condition to each and every call
 - Basic guideline for showing sensitivity to someone is to not invalidate him/her

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Communication

- Effective communication
 - Sensitivity
 - Involves being receptive to others cues
 - Sensitivity and empathy are connected at the hip
 - Being sensitive, acting and speaking with empathy gives you the best chance of connecting with your patients and building a bond of trust

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Communication

- Effective communication
 - Listening
 - Hearing and listening are different
 - Hearing is the physical component, which requires an environment conducive to conversation
 - Listening: process by which you understand not only what was said but also how it was said and associated body language

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Communication

- Effective communication
 - Listening
 - Components that affect listening:
 - Use encouraging behavior
 - When speaking, face the other person
 - Make eye contact
 - Pay attention to the nonverbal clues
 - Occasionally nod your head, smile, or even raise your eyebrows while listening
 - Give your full attention
 - Try not to interrupt while other person is talking
 - Summarize

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Communication

- Effective communication
 - Nonverbal communication
 - Your tone of voice and body language can be more important than the actual words spoken
 - If we do not pay attention to nonverbal communications we see and emit, we are missing a huge portion of the intended message

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Communication

- Effective communication
 - Nonverbal communication
 - Body position
 - Goal of communication in an emergency response is to create a bond of trust to accurately assess and treat your patient

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Communication

- Initial patient contact
 - As you approach, be aware of surroundings by scanning for potential hazards or danger and a route of egress
 - Greet your patient, introduce yourself
 - Ask the patient's name
 - Ask, "How may I help you today" or "What can I do for you today"

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Communication

- Barriers to effective communication
 - Language
 - Visual impairment
 - Hearing impairment

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Communication

- Barriers to effective communication



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Emergency Communications

- Think about what happens to your body physiologically when you are on an emergency call
 - Heart rate increases
 - Blood pressure increases
 - Respiratory rate increases
 - Your adrenaline is flowing and things are happening faster than usual

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Emergency Communications

- Communication between emergency vehicles is necessary, but may not always be simple
 - On the way to an emergency call sirens and horns are blaring, crew members may be trying to talk over the noise
 - You need to be able to hear if dispatch changes the address or indication that the scene is unsafe

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Emergency Communications

- Emergency first responder patient hand-off report
 - After gathering patient information and then assessing, treating the patient, it is time to transfer care to a transporting agency
 - The transporting agency may not have the opportunity to view the same scene as you did

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Emergency Communications

- Communications systems
 - For all of your communication efforts to be effectively transmitted and received, you need to have a functional communication system/network
 - FCC-Federal Communications Commission

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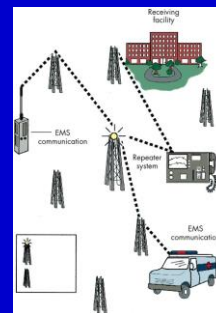
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EMS Communications Consist of

- Base stations
- Mobile radios
- Portable radios
- Cell phones
- Telemetry
- Repeaters



Emergency Communications



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Emergency Communications

- Tips for difficult communications
 - Be honest
 - Speak slowly and clearly
 - Watch your body language
 - Check your own emotions and gather yourself before speaking
 - If you have to deliver bad news or ask private/difficult questions, find an appropriate setting

Emergency Communications

- Tips for pediatric communications
 - Get down to the child's level
 - Keep parent, guardian, relative, or friend with child
 - Try to keep somewhat up to date on pop culture and what kids are into
 - A crying child is telling you he has an open airway, he is breathing, and he has a pulse

Documentation

- It is difficult to overemphasize the absolute importance of complete and accurate documentation
 - After every emergency response, there must be a written record of what occurred

Documentation

- Confidentiality and privacy
 - Any information contained in the PCR is considered protected
 - Information cannot be shared or released except to those persons directly involved in the patient's medical care

Documentation

- Tips for better documentation
 - Write report immediately after response
 - Find a style that works for you, stick with it
 - Be careful not to use slang/jargon
 - Use only approved abbreviations
 - If using computer-based charting, use the "spell check" feature
 - Write your chart well enough so that you can easily recall the incident just by reading through it

Questions?