The Critically Important Orientation of New Employees

It’s tempting to disregard the new employee orientation, but you shouldn’t. The employee and the practice benefit from an official introduction to the clinic.

BY KHALID AL ABOUD, MD

In any healthcare center, whether a hospital or clinic, there is a flow of manpower. After the most qualified individual is hired to add to this flow, the orientation of a newcomer is the first step. Orientation programs are an important component of employee retention and engagement, yet the importance of orientation is often overlooked by many organizations.

New employee orientation sets new employees off on the right foot and effectively integrates them into the organization, quickly enabling each individual to become a contributing member of the work team. New employees should feel the hospitality of the working place through orientation; a lack of an adequate orientation program can result in new employees finding it difficult to adapt to the organization’s culture and may lead to high turnover rates.

Because orientation is their first impression of the practice, new employees should feel every effort to make the first impression a good one. It must be carefully planned and executed to ensure that the employee learns all about his or her future duties and the practice in general.

Hospitals and medical centers have utilized different tools to achieve a successful orientation program. These tools include lectures, videos, checklists, printed manuals, and online materials. Creating a folder of necessary information about the organization is possibly the easiest way to speed up the orientation. This pack may contain the phone directory, organizational chart, important safety measures, and

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<th>TAKE-HOME TIPS</th>
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general policies and procedures of the clinic. A good final step in the orientation program is to have each new employee evaluate the entire orientation process. That information can then be used to update and revise the program.5

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These simple changes can enhance dermatology duties and practices.

Advertise in Bathrooms
A doctor’s clinic waiting room is often an area where one displays the achievements, awards, degrees, and some important photographs of a memorable event in one’s professional life. One may argue that these are self-promoting methods that should be discouraged. What is important to remember is that it is not wrong to display these items but these should be done without an intention of exaggerating one’s achievements and in a manner that only instills confidence in the reader about his choice of the person. It should in no way resemble a commercial advertisement. In addition, it is often seen that patients indulge this free waiting time in the clinic toward reading the newspapers and magazines until their turn is announced.

A possible way in which one can enable patients to review the achievements of the physician (although may sound strange), is to display them in a bio sheet in the bathroom where people may find time to see them without any sort of disturbance. More important than this idea is that bathrooms might be a good space to post important health information and advice to patients. Patients will disseminate information they read to others if they find anything of importance. Otherwise, bathrooms may be kept well decorated and this information would add to it.

Umbilical Examination
Little significance is given to the belly button or umbilical area during clinical examination, especially in dermatology. The umbilicus could be a site for medical conditions such as primary skin tumors or a site of referred pain.1,2 In dermatology, one finishes the examination by mentioning the palms, soles, nails, and mucous membranes separately. Likewise, the umbilical area should be looked at in abdominal examinations and mentioned in situations where lesions tend to specifically affect the area, e.g. Sister Mary Joseph’s in internal malignancy.

Patients’ Feedback
Patient satisfaction is the cornerstone in the success of any practice. The practicing dermatologist should remember to take feedback from patients about the services provided to them. This can be done by listening to the patients directly, making suggestion boxes and encouraging patients to drop their comments, or by distributing printed or online surveys. An integrated approach with the use of surveys and more narrative methods, such as patient stories, was found to be the most effective way of exploring and representing the patient’s experience.3

Patient feedback may be the only source for health administrators to know the best employees out of the whole practice operation in terms of service to patients.