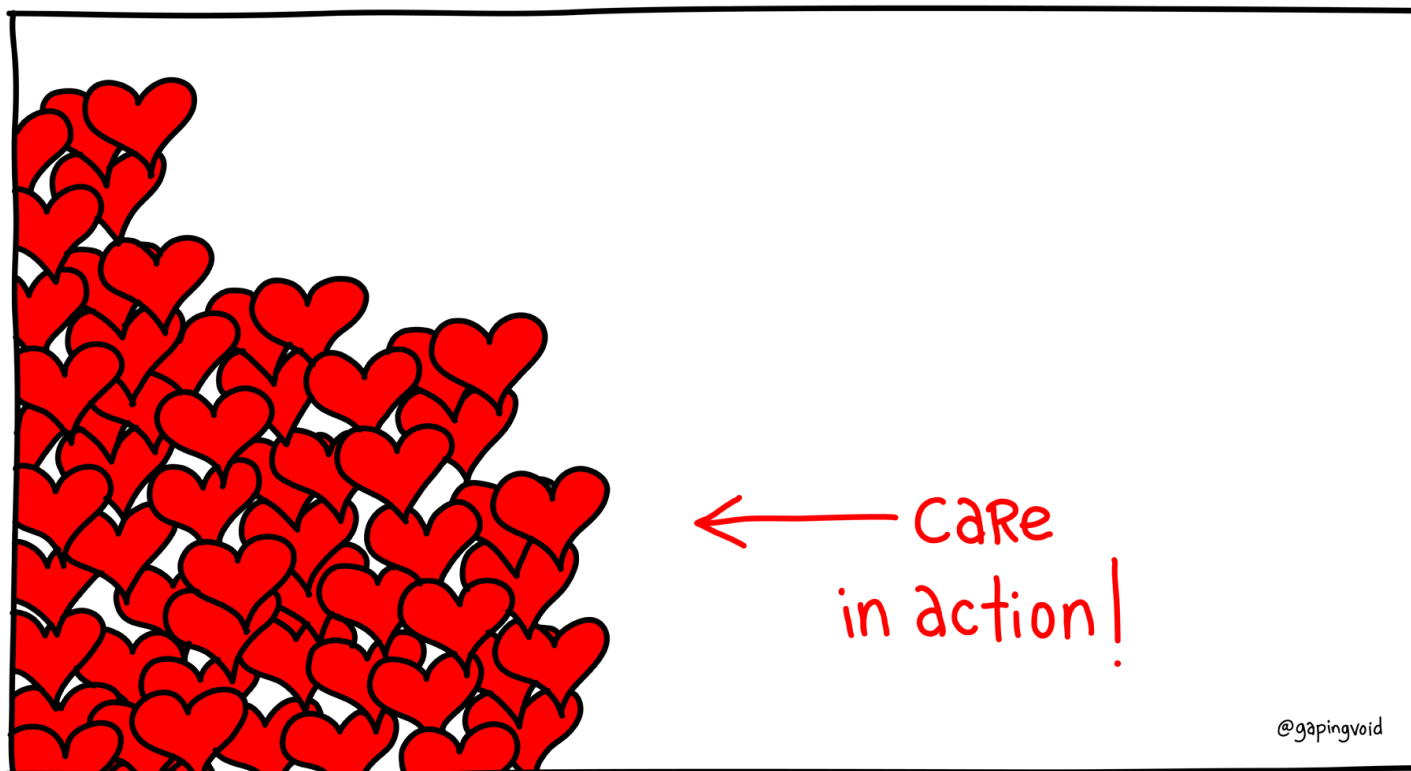




Communicating Empathy

THE HEART-HEAD-HEART™ METHOD



TOOLBOX



www.planetree.org



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1. Preparing to Lead

Expressing Your Commitment

Please take a few minutes to develop your personal commitment statement to share with your team. An example is provided below.

Steps to creating your statement of commitment

1. **An “I” Statement of Commitment:** E.g. *I am committed to helping all members of our team to EXCEL at communicating their caring, etc.*
2. **Why?** E.g. *It makes a big difference for patients and families and also helps us become more fulfilled and engaged, etc.*
3. **Pinch of empathy:** E.g. *Now I realize that it can be hard...*
4. **Reaffirm your commitment and expectation:** E.g. *Still... I expect every one of us to go from very good to GREAT in communicating our caring. I’m going to give it my all and I expect that you will too.*

Example

As a leader, I am committed to mastering Heart-Head-Heart and to holding myself accountable for using this skill with peers, staff, physicians and my family. I am also committed to each of you in holding you accountable, to providing clear expectations, to giving you support through feedback/coaching, and for recognizing your mastery.

This is important to me because our team members need to know how much we care about each other. When our environment is engaging and caring, we have lower stress and higher teamwork. It makes work feel better. This allows us to provide high quality and safe care while delivering excellent experiences to our patients.

I realize the path will take concerted effort, time and attention, and that we may find it challenging to give it the attention it needs. Yet, I expect each of us, including me, to do the work and stay focused to reach our goal of creating a truly caring culture.

Your Leadership Role: Communicating your Personal Commitment

Please take a few minutes to develop your commitment statement.

1. **An “I” Statement of Commitment:** E.g. *I am committed to helping all members of our team to EXCEL at communicating their caring, etc.*
2. **Why?** E.g. *It makes a big difference for patients and families and also helps us become more fulfilled and engaged, etc.*
3. **Pinch of empathy:** E.g. *Now I realize that it can be hard...*
4. **Reaffirm your commitment and expectation:** E.g. *Still... I expect every one of us to go from very good to GREAT in communicating our caring. I'm going to give it my all and I expect that you will too.*

My Statement of Commitment



Plan Summary

1. When will you introduce the program to your team?
 - Exactly how will you accomplish this? (See suggestions on Team Leader Action Plan.)
2. Plan for the *Communicating Empathy* Workshop
 - Schedule?
 - Location?
3. Who will facilitate (and be responsible for having the videos, PowerPoint, and Handbooks needed)?
 - You?
 - An educator or others in your organization who will be facilitating for everyone?
 - Other?
4. Ensuring Attendance
 - How will you ensure widespread attendance?
 - How will you track attendance?
 - Your make-up plan for people who missed it?
5. The Quiz
 - How will you administer the quiz?
(E.g. at the end of the workshop, via email, on your Learning Management System)
 - How will the quiz be scored?
 - How will you track completion?
 - Do you need to pass the completed quizzes along to a program manager, for organization-wide tracking?

6. Plan for Follow-Up Steps (Mastery, Habit-Building and Reinforcement)

- How much time will you allocate for each step?
- What will be your habit-building schedule?
- Who will conduct these? (You? Rotating staff members? An educator or someone else from your organization?)

7. Three Coaching Conversations with Individual Staff Members

- How will you schedule these?
- Will you conduct these?
- Or, if you are not the supervisor, how will you prepare people's supervisors to conduct them?

8. Communicating Your Plan

- What are the key elements of your plan that staff members need to know?
- How can you share these key elements, along with your personal commitment?

Heart-Head-Heart Examples

These examples may be helpful when your team is generating Heart-Head-Heart messages for everyday situations.

Overview




Here are examples of Heart-Head-Heart statements developed by teams in other organizations. Seeing Heart-Head-Heart language that works might help you and your team develop Heart-Head-Heart statements for your everyday situations.

Note: Your goal is not to develop scripts that people use word-for-word. Instead, the idea is to identify message points and provide examples of language that works. Then, by consistently including these message points (in your own words), staff will both manage the business at hand and show their caring. This gives you the benefits of standardization and consistency, without scripting that can stifle staff and interfere with attention to cues in the here-and-now. It is so important to make sure Heart-Head-Heart is delivered in a genuine/authentic way.

Examples of Heart-Head-Heart Included

- A. Communicating About Waits, Delays, and Other Time-Related Issues
- B. Service Recovery and Responding to Complaints
- C. Situations with Coworkers
- D. Tough Situations in a Medical Practice or Ambulatory Center
- E. Tough Situations Related to Patient Finances
- F. Communicating About Opioids
- G. Appreciating People
- H. Heart Statements Related to Survey Items




A. Communicating About Waits, Delays, and Other Time-Related Issues

| |  Heart |  Head |  Heart |
|--|--|--|--|
| When setting an appointment for the patient, adjust their time expectations upfront to prevent frustration later. | <i>I'd like you to know what to expect, so your appointment will go well for you.</i> | <i>I can give you an appointment time of 11 AM. Because we can't predict exactly how much time patients who come before you will need, please arrange to be here at least 2 hours, so you won't get anxious if you do need to wait.</i> | <i>I'll really appreciate that and look forward to seeing you.</i> |
| The patient has been waiting. (Update at least every 10 minutes) | <i>Mrs. Hunt, I'm so sorry we haven't been able to take you yet. I want you to know we haven't forgotten you!</i> | <i>Other patients are taking longer than we predicted, and our care team wants to give each person the time they need. It will probably take another 10 minutes before we're ready for you. If that changes, I'll let you know for sure.</i> | <i>I know it can be hard to wait when you aren't feeling well or you're really busy. I really appreciate your patience and I'll be sure to let you know if there's a change.</i> |
| A patient must wait for test results and their diagnosis. | <i>Since I realize waiting for results can be very stressful, I want to get you the results as soon as I possibly can.</i> | <i>It might take as long as 4 days for me to get back to you with the results. It takes that long for careful analysis. I assure you, as soon as I receive the results, I'll call you.</i> | <i>I'm just sorry it takes so long. I realize the waiting can be very hard.</i> |
| Manager talks with staff member who has been late yet again. | <i>I realize something might have come up that caused you to be late today, and I hope all is well with you.</i> | <i>The fact is, your lateness is not a one-time event. There has been a pattern of lateness that is creating problems for our team. I want to set a time with you today when we can talk privately about this.</i> | <i>I want to help you be successful in this job.</i> |






1. Preparing to Lead

B. Service Recovery and Responding to Complaints




| |  Heart |  Head |  Heart |
|--|---|---|---|
| <i>I don't appreciate what you told my husband at all!</i> | <i>You sound very upset and I'm sorry if I did anything to cause that.</i> | <i>Please tell me more. What happened? What did you hear? How did you react? Tell me the whole story please.</i> | <i>I want to do all I can to make things right for you...and ease your mind.</i> |
| Patient says she heard about remedies on the internet that her nurse did not mention. | <i>I'm glad you brought this to my attention. I'd like to look into it for you.</i> | <i>The internet has so much information, and it's hard to know what would be helpful. How about if I review the information you showed me and see if there's something there that could improve our approach to your illness.</i> | <i>It's great that you're investigating options and bringing them to my attention. This will help us come up with the best possible plan for you.</i> |
| Patient complains to manager about rude staff member. | <i>I'm so sorry this happened to you. While she might have been under a lot of stress, you deserve kindness and respect no matter what.</i> | <i>I will definitely look into this and prevent it from happening again to you or to our other patients.</i> | <i>Thanks so much for telling me, so I can do something about it.</i> |

C. Situations with Coworkers

| |  Heart |  Head |  Heart |
|---|---|---|--|
| Physician says, "I've been looking all over for this report!" | <i>There's so much paper to manage. I know it's frustrating.</i> | <i>I'd be happy to help you locate it. Are there some places it might be that I could check for you?</i> | <i>You have enough on your mind without worrying about this. I want to help.</i> |
| Physician who takes too long with patients and keeps other patients waiting. | <i>I know how much you care for your patients and you are generous to want to spend extra time with them.</i> | <i>Many people are waiting right now, all of whom scheduled time to bring their children in. And they are agitated from the long wait. Could you possibly speed up?</i> | <i>I know it's hard to stick to a tight schedule when you're trying to give people individual attention. Is there anything I can do to help?</i> |
| You are late with a report you promised to a colleague. | <i>I'm so sorry I didn't get this to you earlier. I know you were relying on me.</i> | <i>I'll get it to you first thing Monday for sure. Will that work?</i> | <i>I'm so sorry to keep you waiting. And I appreciate your understanding.</i> |






D. Tough Situations in a Medical Practice or Ambulatory Center

| |  Heart |  Head |  Heart |
|--|--|---|---|
| <p>Patient wants to discuss many issues. Doctor hasn't planned to give this much time to this one appointment.</p> <p>Many people are waiting.</p> | <p><i>I realize you have more concerns you'd like to discuss. I'm sorry to say that there isn't time for me to address them all right now, and I really want to give your concerns the attention they deserve.</i></p> | <p><i>I can arrange for you to talk with our Nurse Practitioner, Susan Haley, in person or by phone. She's terrific and could be very helpful. Or you could make another appointment so you and I can talk further. Right now, we need to end, since I am keeping my next patient waiting. How about if I have Susan call you later today? And if you still have concerns, you can make another appointment with me.</i></p> | <p><i>Thank you for your understanding. I do want to help you with all of your concerns.</i></p> |
| <p>Patient wants a remedy or test that doctor doesn't think is appropriate.</p> <p>Example: <i>I need an antibiotic!</i></p> | <p><i>I realize you're eager to get better and I want to help you get better too.</i></p> | <p><i>I think you have a virus that won't be helped by antibiotics. I've seen others lately with similar symptoms, and they're getting better without antibiotics. I want to avoid unnecessary antibiotics for you, because the more you take, the more you build up resistance to them, so they won't work so well for you in the future.</i></p> <p><i>Please call or email me if your symptoms get worse, or if you aren't doing better within 2 days.</i></p> | <p><i>Thanks for working with me on this. I really want what's best for you in the short run AND in the long run.</i></p> |
| <p>Patient asks nurse/doctor to prescribe for child over the phone.</p> | <p><i>I realize you feel sure of what's wrong with your daughter and that it would be inconvenient for you to bring her in.</i></p> | <p><i>Still, for her safety, I want to see her before I prescribe medication for her.</i></p> | <p><i>I want to be sure we're doing the right thing for her. Thanks for your understanding.</i></p> |



E. Tough Situations Related to Money




| |  Heart |  Head |  Heart |
|--|--|---|--|
| Patient says they don't have money for co-pay. | <i>I realize that's frustrating.</i> | <i>The fact is, the co-pay is required by your insurance company. How about if we talk about a plan that makes it possible for you to pay a little at a time?</i> | <i>I want to make this manageable for you.</i> |
| Patient refuses to pay copay because doctor told them to bring in their child for a "well visit" that they didn't ask for. Parent thinks practice is just money hungry. | <i>I realize it's frustrating to be asked to pay a copay, especially when you're here because your son's doctor asked you to come.</i> | <i>We asked you to bring in your son for his sake. Your doctor takes his responsibility for your son's health very seriously and wants to prevent health problems. And your health plan requires us to collect a copay even when the doctor suggests the additional visit. We could work out a payment plan so you can pay this over time. Would you like that?</i> | <i>Thank you for understanding.</i> |
| Patient wants you to change a procedure code so insurance will cover a physical that's too soon to be covered. | <i>I realize this insurance situation is very frustrating for you.</i> | <i>I'm sorry to say I am not able to alter the date to solve that problem. Our practice rules don't allow this, and I'm responsible for accurate records.</i> | <i>I'm very sorry that I don't have a legal way to fix the problem.</i> |



F. Communicating About Opioids

| |  Heart |  Head |  Heart |
|--|--|---|--|
| Patient says: <i>“But I really need the medicine! Don’t you trust me? I thought you cared about me.”</i> | <i>You sound very distressed and I’d like to help.</i> | <i>I’m not comfortable giving you a prescription for this drug because your illness doesn’t call for this, and it isn’t safe for you. I can suggest another over-the-counter drug that should help your pain—without any risks to you.</i> | <i>I care about you and I want to reduce your pain without risks to you.</i> |
| Patient says: <i>“I need MUCH more medication.”</i> | <i>I’m so sorry you’re having so much pain.</i> | <i>The fact is, you’re already taking a high dose, and there is scientific evidence showing that the risk of an overdose increases at higher doses. How about if we discuss other ways to help you manage your pain without so much risk?</i> | <i>I’m very concerned about you and I want us to figure out how to lessen your suffering.</i> |
| Patient says: <i>“I’d really like to get off these meds, but I’m afraid to. Is there something else I could do?”</i> | <i>I think it’s great that you want to hear more about other ways to manage your pain.</i> | <i>I’d like to discuss tapering off or reducing your dose slowly. I’ve found that most people can function better without worse pain after tapering off their dose. Even though pain might get a bit worse at first, most people find they have less pain after tapering off.</i> | <i>What do you think about trying this? We can stay in close touch to discuss how you’re doing, and I’ll be with you every step of the way.</i> |

G. Appreciating People

| |  Heart |  Head |  Heart |
|--|---|---|---|
| Patient gives you a nice compliment when introducing you to his son. | <i>Joe, I really appreciated what you told your son about me when he visited earlier.</i> | <i>I'm so glad you're happy with our relationship. It makes me feel really good.</i> | <i>You made my day!</i> |
| Patient has been engaged, cooperative and good-natured. | <i>We've been through a lot together today, and I just want you to know how great you've been through this.</i> | <i>Tests, pushes and probes, waiting, worrying—all of that happened for you today.</i> | <i>I really admire your good nature even when you're under so much stress.</i> |
| Coworker has been under extreme stress because of a staff shortage. | <i>Wow, I'm really impressed by you today!</i> | <i>I can see that you've been knocking yourself out to make up for our short staffing.</i> | <i>I want you to know I really appreciate it.</i> |
| You noticed a physician being very attentive and calming to one of your patients. | <i>You know, Dr. Smith, I really admire the way you were so calm and reassuring to Jill.</i> | <i>You really tuned in and listened, and I think you made it easy for her to open up about her worries.</i> | <i>Thank you so much. I'm sure she feels safe in your good hands.</i> |



H. Heart Statements Related to Survey Items

| Survey Item | How can you explain, making clear your good intentions? |
|---|---|
| Staff includes you in decisions about your treatment. | <i>I want to know what you think. I want you to be involved as we plan your treatment.</i> |
| Staff responsiveness to concerns and complaints. | <i>I hear what you're saying and I want to resolve this for you.</i> |
| Staff addressed your emotional needs. | <i>I want you to feel free to talk to me about what you're feeling, since I care about your emotional well-being too.</i> |
| Staff showed sensitivity to your inconvenience. | <i>I wish I could speed up the service for you, since I realize it's inconvenient.</i> |
| Staff kept you informed. | <i>I want to give you an update, so you won't be wondering.</i> |
| Info to family about condition and treatment. | <i>I want you to know exactly what's going on with your child, so you can feel clear and rest easy.</i> |
| Instructions about preparation. | <i>I want you to know exactly what you need to do to get ready, so you won't have to reschedule or do the test again.</i> |
| Informed about delays. | <i>I'm here to give you an update about the delay. I don't want you to feel anxious about what's happening.</i> |
| How well pain was controlled. | <i>I want you to help yourself be pain-free and comfortable.</i> |
| Nurses informative about treatment. | <i>I want you to feel really clear about what will happen.</i> |
| Staff cared about me as a person. | <i>I was so sorry to hear about your mother passing. I imagine it feels like quite a loss.</i> |
| Likelihood of recommending. | <i>I want you to feel good recommending us to your family and friends.</i> |

Record Stories for Future Use

Via email or print, share a caring story you recorded earlier. A great story quickly relays the pertinent setting information, then summarizes what you did, and ends with why it has meaning to you.

Example

Last week I was visiting with many of you to discuss what you have noticed so far when you've used Heart-Head-Heart to communicate your caring. I heard many wonderful stories, and this one really touched me because the person who shared it seemed to feel so good about herself. Here is what she shared:

Yesterday I had kind of a neat thing happen with a new expectant mother, and it made me feel really good! She has been experiencing some blood pressure issues. I listened to her and noted what she was feeling—not just her medical symptoms. For me, it was a different way of listening. Then, before I told her how we were going to manage her medical issue, I acknowledged her feelings of being scared, worried, and now stressed. She seemed to relax a bit after hearing me tell her that I had noted these things. Next, I explained what we are going to do to control the blood pressure. She seemed to tune in to the specifics, which made me feel like she would carefully monitor her symptoms. Then, I wrapped up by letting her know that I was her partner in this and that together we would do the best for her and her baby. It was a small change in how I relate to a patient, and yet it seemed to make a big difference to her. It's funny, but that little extra bit of caring left me feeling really good walking out of that room! And I'm still thinking about it a day later!

So many good stories happen every day here, and I am proud of the work we do, and the care we communicate to those we serve and each other. Thank YOU for being part of our amazing team. I am sure you have your own stories, and I would love to hear them!

Personalize Your Emails with Heart-Head-Heart (or at least a lot of Heart!)

When you're texting or emailing, you're interacting directly with a computer or phone, but your text or email is going to land in the hands of a human! Picture the human when you're writing, so you communicate with them, not with the keys. Use Heart-Head-Heart and you will:

- Connect with the other person.
- Be less likely to offend the other person (E.g. by coming across as curt or abrupt).
- Gain respect.
- Be much more likely to get the result you want.

Tips

1. Especially if you haven't been in touch for a while, start by connecting with the human.

Hi Rita,

Long time, no see!

Now, asking a favor! I heard you've had a good experience with a leadership coach, and I'm looking for one. Could you please give me info on how to connect?

I really appreciate it.



1. Preparing to Lead

TOOL 1e. Personalize Your Emails with Heart-Head-Heart cont.

2. Use Heart to avoid coming across as abrupt or curt.

Head Message Only

I can't get you the info you wanted today.
I will get it to you tomorrow by noon.

Heart-Head-Heart Message

Jim,

Heart: I'm very sorry to say...

Head: I won't be able to get you the info you wanted today. I'm still working on it and will get it to you tomorrow by noon at the latest.

Heart: I hope that works for you, and I really appreciate your understanding.

3. Make someone's day with an unexpected Appreciation email or text.

Heart: I'm writing to say a giant THANKS!

Head: Heard you supported my proposal to our boss.

Heart: I really appreciate it!

4. Soften sensitive messages with Heart.

Subject: Requesting a conversation with you Dolores

Heart: I know you care about your patients very much.

Head: This morning, I received a complaint from a patient that involved you, and I'd like to find a time later today or tomorrow to talk with you about it. Can you please suggest a couple of times when you're available?

Heart: I'd really appreciate it.

Yes, But...

Will this make your messages too long?

- Not if you use really short phrases or sentences. Also, the impact will make a few extra words worth it.

Will you be perceived as phony?

- Not unless your messages ARE phony.

Will people say, “Look, he’s using Heart-Head-Heart on me!”

- Maybe so. Let that be a lesson to them!

2. Introductory Activities with Staff

The Power of Communicating Caring in OUR Jobs

Suggestions

- Ask your team to get in pairs or group people according to their jobs so that they can get specific.
- Afterwards, ask everyone to share with the whole group.
- Ask your team: When we communicate our caring, how do the people we serve stand to benefit?

Sample Responses:

- Less anxious
- More cooperative
- More engaged
- More relaxed
- More likely to ask questions

- Ask your team: When we communicate our caring, how do WE benefit?

Sample Responses:

- People are more cooperative; this makes our job easier.
- People are grateful and show it.
- We connect with our caring mission.
- We are more satisfied in our work.

- End with these message points:

- Communicating with caring is a win-win situation for patients, families, and all of us on the healthcare team.
- Express your excitement about the *Communicating Empathy* and learning the concrete skills to do a better job of it.

How does it FEEL when you're caring?

Think of a time when you felt you really made a positive difference to someone at work.

- What was the situation?
- What did you do or say?
- What happened?
- What did you say or do that makes you proud?

Suggestions

- Complete in pairs and have people take turns.
- Invite sharing with the whole group. What did people feel GOOD about?
- End with these message points:
 - When we successfully make a connection to people, it feels good and we make a difference.
 - The other person benefits, and so do WE. It's a win-win situation.
 - Using the Heart-Head-Heart Method will help us have MORE of these experiences.

3. Basic Tools for Repeated Use

Skill-at-a-Glance

To come across as both competent and caring, combine Heart and Head messages in your communication with patients, families and coworkers.

Messages

♥ **Heart** messages express caring; they deal with emotions and feel personal and heart-warming.

🧠 **Head** messages are about the tasks, information and business at hand.

Tips


- The Heart-Head-Heart method helps you remember to mix Heart and Head messages, and use at least twice as much Heart than Head.
- Start with ♥ **Heart**: Address the person's feelings and anxieties. Make your caring felt immediately.
- Say your 🧠 **Head** messages: Meet needs for information, decisions and actions.
- End with ♥ **Heart**: Close on a personal or feeling note.

Cards

Skill Reminder Card

The Heart-Head-Heart Method

- ♥ Start with **Heart**. Be caring and personal.
- 🧠 Move to **Head** messages—about tasks and information.
- ♥ End with **Heart**. Add more caring.


Communicating Empathy
THE HEART-HEAD-HEART™ METHOD

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Pat-on-the-Back Card


Here's a Pat on the Back!
You did it! I heard you use the Heart-Head-Heart method with one of the people you serve.

To: _____

Here's what I heard you say...

Very impressive way to express your caring!

Signed _____


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Here's a Pat on the Back!

You did it! I heard you use the Heart-Head-Heart method with one of the people you serve.

To: _____

Here's what I heard you say...

Very impressive way to express your caring!

Signed _____



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You did it! I heard you use the Heart-Head-Heart method with one of the people you serve.

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Here's what I heard you say...

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Pat-on-the-Back Card

Here's a Pat on the Back!

You did it! I heard you use the Heart-Head-Heart method with one of the people you serve.

To: _____

Here's what I heard you say...

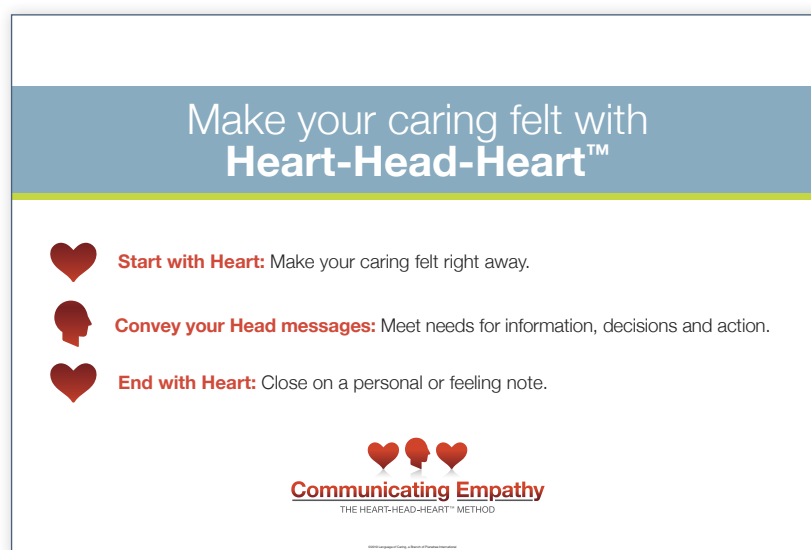
Very impressive way to express your caring!

Signed _____



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Posters



Make your caring felt with **Heart-Head-Heart™**



Start with Heart: Make your caring felt right away.



Convey your Head messages: Meet needs for information, decisions and action.



End with Heart: Close on a personal or feeling note.



Communicating Empathy

THE HEART-HEAD-HEART™ METHOD

Patients, families, and
our coworkers don't trust
how much we know...



...until they know
how much we care.

Communicate from your head and your heart!



Communicating Empathy

THE HEART-HEAD-HEART™ METHOD

3. Basic Tools for Repeated Use

Tool 3d. Appreciating Your Team with Heart-Head-Heart

Appreciating Your Team with Heart-Head-Heart

Heart-Head-Heart is a wonderful model for expressing meaningful, effective appreciation. And, as leader, you will help your team be more effective with Heart-Head-Heart by using it with them.

| Situations | Heart | Head | Heart |
|--|---|---|--|
| Staff member has been under extreme stress because of a staff shortage. | <i>Wow, I'm really impressed by you today!</i> | <i>I can see that you've been knocking yourself out to make up for our short staffing.</i> | <i>I want you to know I really appreciate it.</i> |
| A patient praised a member of your staff. | <i>June, I want to thank you for doing a great job with Ms. Hampton.</i> | <i>Her daughter asked for me to tell you how much her mother likes you and feels safe in your caring hands.</i> | <i>You do us proud, and I really appreciate you for it.</i> |
| Staff member is back after being quite ill. | <i>Stacy, I'm so glad to see you. I hope you're feeling much better!</i> <i>I realize it can be hard to come back after being out for so long.</i> | <i>I want to help you ease back in, so you can stay well. Please let me know if and when you need help, and I'll do what I can to support you.</i> | <i>I really value you and what you bring to this team. Your well-being is really important to me.</i> |
| Two staff members are having a conflict, and you, their supervisor, wants them to resolve it. | <i>I know you two are both committed to your work and want what's best for our patients.</i> | <i>I heard that you are at odds with each other about who is supposed to do what for our patients, and I'm very concerned. I'm sure others can see and feel the stress between you and that is unsettling. I'm asking you to go to lunch with each other and try to resolve this.</i> | <i>I respect you both very much, and I want you to have a good relationship. I appreciate you working to resolve this.</i> |
| You noticed a physician being very attentive and calming to one of your patients. | <i>You know, Dr. Smith, I really admire the way you were so calm and reassuring to Jill.</i> | <i>You tuned in and listened, and I think you made it easy for her to open up about her worries.</i> | <i>Thank you so much. I'm sure she appreciates your support.</i> |



4. Self-Checks

Self-Check: How Am I doing?

| Do I communicate my caring with patients, families and coworkers? <i>Do I...</i> | Rarely | Sometimes | Most of the Time | Always |
|---|--------|-----------|------------------|--------|
| Approach patients and families in a caring way? | | | | |
| Make an effort to express my caring to people, no matter how busy I am? | | | | |
| Recognize the importance of showing my caring not just at work, but in all of my relationships? | | | | |
| Compliment coworkers when they are GREAT at showing their caring to the people they serve? | | | | |
| Feel good about myself when I realize I've been especially caring in a situation with a patient, family member or coworker? | | | | |
| What am I doing really well when it comes to doing my job in a way that shows my caring to other people? | | | | |
| What do I need to do (or stop doing) to show my caring more effectively? | | | | |



Self-Check: My Use

| Do I mix Head and Heart messages when I communicate with patients, families and coworkers? <i>Do I...</i> | Rarely | Sometimes | Most of the Time | Always |
|---|--------|-----------|------------------|--------|
| Start with Heart—a caring message—before delving into the business at hand? | | | | |
| Connect personally upfront before getting into the tasks? | | | | |
| Move beyond showing my caring and address the person's information needs as well? | | | | |
| End with Heart, so I make my last impression a caring one? | | | | |
| Use the Heart-Head-Heart sandwich metaphor to remember to mix Heart and Head messages? | | | | |
| Make more Heart statements than Head statements? | | | | |
| Respond with respect and appreciation even if the person appears angry? | | | | |
| Listen intently when the person is talking to me? | | | | |
| What am I doing really well when it comes to using the Heart-Head-Heart method? | | | | |
| What do I need to do (or stop doing) to be more effective with Heart-Head-Heart? | | | | |

5. Tools for Coaching Conversations

Coaching Conversation #1

Performance Discussion and Goal-Setting

1. Schedule a time to meet with each team member.
2. Meet with each team member for 5–10 minutes.
3. Review their completed Self-Check and provide your perspective as well.
4. Appreciate their strengths.
5. Work together to set a goal to apply Heart-Head-Heart in an interaction that occurs repeatedly in their job. Make a note of this, so you can check in about it later.
6. Use a Heart-Head-Heart statement to thank them for their time and thoughtful discussion.

Coaching Conversation #2

Check-in about Feedback

- How did it feel to give feedback to coworkers about their caring communication?
- How did it feel to receive feedback from a coworker about your communication?
- What did you learn about how your caring is perceived?
- What will you do to continue to improve your communication of empathy and caring?
- How can I help?

Coaching Conversation #3

Taking Stock and Goal-Setting

1. Regarding caring communication, what are you most proud of?
2. How have you grown since starting *Communicating Empathy: The Heart-Head-Heart Method*?
3. What area(s) do you still struggle with, and when do you find it most difficult to express caring?
4. What will you do to continue improving your expression of empathy and communication of caring?
5. How can I help you?
6. What is one thing I could do as a leader to communicate my caring toward team members more effectively?

6. Rounding and Feedback Tools

TOOL 6a. Feedback from a Coworker on Your Caring

Feedback from a Coworker on Your Caring

Your Feedback, Please!

To: _____ From: _____

You had the chance to observe me when I was interacting with a patient, family member and/or coworker. Based on what you observed or heard, will you please give me feedback? I welcome it.

Thank you.

| Questions | YES | NO | Suggestions |
|--|-----|----|-------------|
| 1. Did I connect with the patient or family member? | | | |
| 2. Did I give them undivided attention while they were speaking with me? | | | |
| 3. Did I appear to care about their feelings and concerns? | | | |
| 4. Did I show my caring in my words? | | | |
| 5. Did I show my caring in my non verbal actions? | | | |
| 6. Based on your observation, did I come across as a caring person? | | | |

| What grade would you give me on my communication of caring? (circle one) | A | B | C | D | E | F |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Why? Anything I can do in the future to show my caring more effectively? | | | | | | |



Patient Feedback Tool

My team and I want to provide excellent care and service in a personal and compassionate manner. Will you give me some feedback about your experience with us? I'd really appreciate it.

Thank you.

| Questions | Notes and Follow-Up |
|---|---------------------|
| How well does our team listen to you with their full attention when you're talking? | |
| To what extent does our team seem to care about you and your feelings and concerns? | |
| Based on your experience with us, how caring do you feel that we are? | |
| Which members of our team really stand out as very caring people? Why? | |
| Which members of our team don't seem caring? What makes you feel that way? | |
| Please suggest one thing my team or I can do in the future to show our caring more effectively. | |



Patient's Family Feedback

Dear Family Member,

I want to provide you and the patients with exceptional care and service. Right now, I'm working on communicating with empathy in conversations with patients and families. Will you please think about our conversation today and give me feedback. I welcome it.

Thank you.

| Questions | Yes |
|---|-----|
| 1. Did I connect with the patient personally? | |
| 2. Did I invite the patient to talk about his or her experience and feelings? | |
| 3. Did I acknowledge the patient's feelings? | |
| 4. Did I show acceptance of the patient's feelings, without judging? | |
| 5. Did I follow up on the patient's feelings? | |
| 6. Did I show empathy for YOUR feelings? | |
| 7. Overall, how well did I show empathy? | |
| Please suggest one thing I can do in the future to be more effective. | |

7. Program Review

Program Review

Taking Stock of Implementation Process and Results

Below you'll find a survey you can use to gather perspectives on your strategy, its process and results. Use this midway through implementation and again at the end, so you can identify ways to improve your process and strengthen your results

| Survey Items | Not True | Partly True | Very True | N/A | Notes |
|---|----------|-------------|-----------|-----|-------|
| Leaders make a case for how the <i>Communicating Empathy</i> program will help people live their helping mission and the values of the organization. | | | | | |
| There is a system for monitoring the <i>Communicating Empathy</i> workshop completion and for ensuring that all leaders created the conditions for staff participation. | | | | | |
| Leaders use the observation, feedback and coaching tools to help their staff master and apply Heart-Head-Heart. | | | | | |
| Leaders engage their teams in the Habit-Builder activities that help people practice, master and apply Heart-Head-Heart. | | | | | |
| Reminder cards, posters and other reinforcement tools are posted or distributed to remind people to use Heart-Head-Heart. | | | | | |
| Leaders act as role models. They use Heart-Head-Heart in their written and spoken communications. | | | | | |



7. Program Review

| Survey Items | Not True | Partly True | Very True | N/A | Notes |
|---|----------|-------------|-----------|-----|-------|
| People use Heart-Head-Heart in their rounding interactions. | | | | | |
| In public areas, people connect with each other in a more caring way than they did before the program. | | | | | |
| Leaders have implemented recognition practices to acknowledge and celebrate people who communicate with empathy and use Heart-Head-Heart. | | | | | |
| New employee orientation introduces the Heart-Head-Heart method and provides a path to developing the skill (e.g. workshop reruns, peer coaching or a combination). | | | | | |
| Leaders use observation, feedback, and coaching tools to verify use of Heart-Head-Heart in people's everyday work. | | | | | |
| Staff members can explain the Heart-Head-Heart method. | | | | | |
| Staff members say that using Heart-Head-Heart benefits them personally. | | | | | |
| We have methods for encouraging employees to share their stories of using Heart-Head-Heart with patients, families and each other. | | | | | |
| Since the start of the <i>Communicating Empathy</i> program, our staff members receive more positive comments from patients. | | | | | |
| Since the start of the <i>Communicating Empathy</i> program, coworker relationships are more harmonious. | | | | | |
| Since the start of the <i>Communicating Empathy</i> program, our patient survey metrics have improved. | | | | | |



8. Celebration Ideas

Celebration Ideas to Spark Your Creativity

1. Use the Starfish Story as Center Piece of Celebration

As the old man walked the beach at dawn, he noticed a young man ahead of him picking up starfish and flinging them into the sea. Finally, catching up with the youth, he asked him why he was doing this. The answer was that the stranded starfish would die if left until the morning sun.

“But the beach goes on for miles and there are millions of starfish,” countered the old man. “How can your effort make any difference?”

The young man looked at the starfish in his hand and then threw it to safety in the wave.

And he said, “It makes a difference to this one.”

- Tell the Starfish story.
- Then let your team know that every time they show empathy and caring, they are like the young man on the beach—making a difference to someone.
- Individually thank each one of them and give them a starfish pin.

2. Stories of Empathy in Action: A Keepsake Magazine

Collect and publish a magazine Empathy in Action—full of team members’ stories and pictures of the team. Encourage people to read it to their kids, show it to their families, and savor the caring people who comprise the team.

3. Mutual Award Ceremony

Form groups of 3 or 4. Have each group prepare awards for one another and then present them in front of everyone.

4. Success Toasts

Invite team members to toast one another and the group, identifying people and actions that contributed to the successful learning, mastery and application of Heart-Head-Heart.

5. Team Strength Bombardment

This approach promotes peer recognition, positive feedback, support, and a sense of community, and is a great way to celebrate. Your team and the individuals within it have come so far together to communicate with empathy, using Heart-Head-Heart. This approach celebrates each person's growth and contribution by inviting the entire team to appreciate one another.

Place each employee's name on an index card. Scramble the cards in a box or hat.

Arrange the employees in a circle. Place an empty chair in the circle as the "spotlight" chair. (Decorate it with streamers or balloons.)

Next, explain to your group how this strength bombardment will work.

- Select one card at a time.
- The person whose name is picked sits in the spotlight seat.
- For one full minute, the rest of the group bombards this staff member with everything they appreciate about him or her, emphasizing strengths: contributions to the team's services and patients, something they appreciate or admire, characteristics they respect, acknowledgement for the way the person works with others, etc.
- Continue selecting cards and spotlighting one person at a time until everyone has had a turn. Don't include a card for yourself (someone might suggest that you get a turn, but don't be disappointed if that doesn't happen).
- Afterward, ask for reactions to the activity:
 - How did it feel to GIVE recognition?
 - How did it feel to RECEIVE recognition?
- Make a short pitch on the wonderful strengths people showed as they learned, practiced and applied Heart-Head-Heart. Thank them for their engagement and mutual support, and for the difference they make to patients, families and each other.

6. Heart-Head-Heart Appreciation Notes

- Prepare special Heart-Head-Heart notes for expressing appreciation, such as:
 - *Ta-daah! I saw you communicate from the heart and I admire that!*
 - *Here's what I heard you say...*
 - *I was impressed because...*
 - *You make my heart sing...*
- Have teams or departments prepare these Appreciation Notes for other teams or departments, thanking them for the specific ways they help/make things work for patients, families and coworkers.
- The receiving team or department should then post these notes or read them aloud during huddles or staff meetings.

7. The Cookie Celebration

Most bakeries are happy to celebrate their local healthcare facilities by donating all or a portion of the cost for preparing special cookies. Ask them to create a Heart-Head-Heart Sandwich Cookie. The outside represents Heart messages and should be heart shaped. The filling represents Head messages and should be a delicious center in a different color. Have leaders or your steering team hand out the cookies and thank people for all of their efforts.

9. The Impact of Communicating Empathy—Evidence Base

TOOL 9. The Impact of Communicating Empathy—Evidence Base

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9. The Impact of Communicating Empathy—Evidence Base

TOOL 9. The Impact of Communicating Empathy—Evidence Base cont.

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