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Exam Room Success

Evidence Based
Communication



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The influence of the Patient-Clinician Relationship on Healthcare Outcomes

PLOS One April 2014

- Statistically significant improved outcomes with positive relationships

A Review of the Evidence and Recommendations on Communication Skills and the Patient-Provider Relationship

Gastroenterology Nov 2021

- Improved communication = Improved patient outcomes





Bayer Veterinary Care Usage Study

- **43 % of pet owners didn't completely agree that the vet communicates in a language they understand**



AVMA Study

- **60.5% of Clients Extremely Satisfied**
- **30% Somewhat Satisfied**
- **9.5% Dissatisfied**
 - 40% of Dissatisfied Clients said they would switch practices

- › **AVMA study found that the most influential factor to client satisfaction was perceived value of service provided by their veterinarian**

Merck Health Well Being Study 2020 (by Brakke Consulting)



DATA TAKEN BEFORE COVID 19

- 48% recommend the career vs. 52 % would not
- 9.4% suffering
- 34.6% scored getting by
- **56% were flourishing**

100 Best Jobs 2023 US News & World Report

Nurse Practitioner

#1



Veterinarian

#20



Can Bedside Manner Be Taught?

- Studies Lacking
- Modeling Behavior (Human Medical Model)
- Part Skill/ Part Intuition
- Can Personality Change?



Client Interactions in Exam Room



1

Prepare

2

Suspend Your Judgement at the Door

3

Read the Room / Discussion

4

Examination

5

Recommendations

6

Self Assessment

1 Prepare

- Mirror Check, are you presentable?
- Check Chart
 - Have you seen clients/pet before?
 - Gender and name of the pet
- Ongoing health concerns
 - MASTER PROBLEM LIST**
- Do some quick research



2 Suspend Your Judgement at the Door

- This is not about you, this is not personal
- **The mission of a veterinarian:**
To help the medical needs of our patients at whatever level our client wants.
(providing it is not abusive to the pet)
- 1 to 10 Scale



Building trust and rapport early in the new doctor-patient relationship: a longitudinal qualitative study

Med Education Feb 2017

- ▶ Patients assume the provider is knowledgeable; what they hope for is a provider who genuinely cares
- ▶ Patients wanted and needed to believe that their new doctor would have their best interest at heart
- ▶ Actionable items, what patients wanted:
 - Reassurance
 - Results explained
 - Not to feel judged by their providers
 - To be participants in medical decisions

3 Read the Room / Discussion

- Don't rush (even if you are in a rush)
- Idle Chit Chat
 - Pet's body language
 - Caretaker's body language
- Never let them see you sweat



4 The Examination

- Talk through your exam
- Show
- Explain (read your client as you explain)
- Be sure of yourself – not overconfident
- Admit what you don't know



The 4 E's

1

ENGAGEMENT

What has brought you in today?

2

EMPATHY

Nod, you understand.

3

EDUCATION

4

ENLISTMENT



▶ Interruption and patient satisfaction in resident-patient consultations
(*Health Education Zhang et. al. 2008*)

▶ Doctors talking with patients/patients talking with doctors: Improving communication in medical visits (Roter, Hall 1992)

- Verbal and **Non-Verbal Cues**

▶ A Systematic Review of Patients' Experiences in Communicating with Primary Care Physicians: Intercultural Encounters and a Balance between **Vulnerability** and Integrity (Rocque 2015)

4 Models of Physician (Ezekiel and Linda Emmanuel)

1

PATERNALISTIC

Tell the patient
what to do

2

INFORMATIVE

Patient is
informed and
given autonomy

3

INTERPRETIVE

Patient's wishes
are interpreted
and decision is
collaborative

4

DELIBERATIVE

Physician guides
patient toward a
decision

5 Delivering Recommendations

- Outline the ideal, accept the real
- Make concrete recommendations
- This is not personal.



Final Question

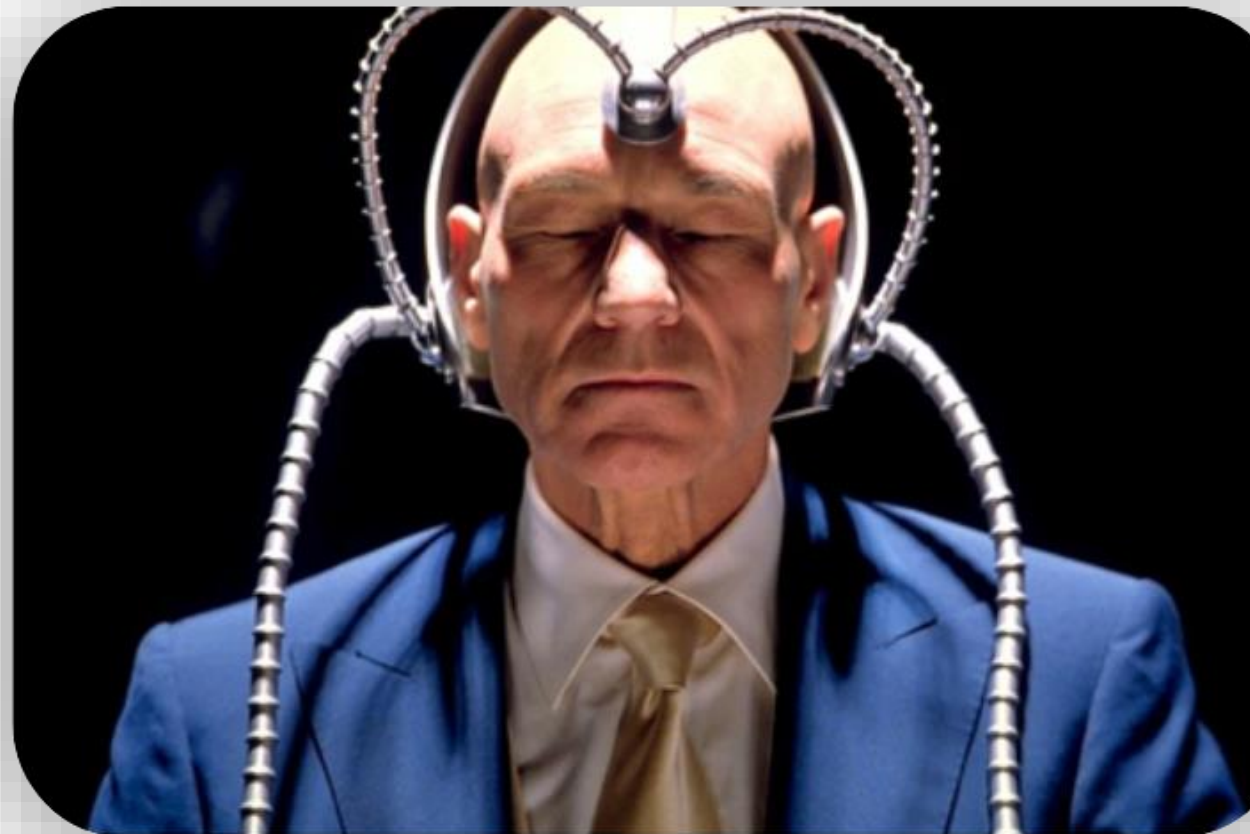
“Do you have any further questions or concerns?”

The client should leave feeling “cared for”



6 Self Assessment

- **Did I connect?**
- **Was that efficient?**
- Discuss with tech in the room if possible
- Follow up questionnaire?



The Role of the Mentor



- “Knowledge is communicable, wisdom is not.”
- Cameras in rooms – legal concern
- Technicians make the best spies
- Chemistry of clients / doctor preference
- Secret shoppers
- Change comes from within

The Difficult Client



- Don't take it personally
- Show empathy
 - bring the focus back to the pet
- Be the calm one in the room
- Set boundaries

Difficult Clients - Pitfalls



- Interrupt
- Deflect / Dismiss
- Blame
- Get Emotional Yourself

Moral Distress

- Moral Distress – when one knows the ethically correct action to take but feels powerless to take that action
- JVIM (Oct 2018) 889 veterinarians interviewed.
 - 79% said they were asked to provide care that was futile
 - >70% reported no training in conflict resolution or self-care
- To be able to say no, you need a good yes

JAVMA July 2024 Study on Burnout

- Burnout rates US veterinarians same as employed US public
- Serious psychological distress more common in vets
- Neuroticism vs Extroversion
- 3 Factors
 - Work/Life balance
 - Effective stress coping mechanisms
 - **Positive clinic culture**

What Makes a Successful Veterinarian



Reading List

- Effective Communication in Veterinary Medicine
Vet Clinics of North America Sep 2021
- Better by Atul Gawande
- How Doctors Think by Jerome Groopman
- Doctors Talking with Patients/Patients Talking with Doctors: Improving Communication in Medical Visits by Roter and Hall



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Thank you!

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