



# Speaking the Same Language

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Healthcare is a complex environment. Just as every weather pattern is different for an airplane pilot, every patient care situation is different for healthcare teams. Not to mention the fact that the so-called "situation" is a human being who is implicitly trusting the healthcare team with their care.

Adding to the complexity is the fact that the people who comprise the healthcare team are all highly trained, but in different learning

environments. Nurses, doctors, midwives and other members of the team are all educated independently within their own vertical. As a result, they all speak different dialects of the same language of care.

Yet, interdisciplinary collaborative care is the fundamental key to improving outcomes for patients. Strong teamwork and communication are pivotal to high performance in any group activity. It's been documented many times that the better the collective teamwork, the better the performance of the group — no matter the situation.

Certainly, it's understood

that when coworkers on a healthcare team don't get along, communication is delayed, blame-oriented or incomplete. Teamwork can be non-existent. As a result, the quality of care for the patient suffers.

Ultimately, this becomes a festering, never-ending cycle. It's virtually impossible to have good communication and teamwork without a correspondingly good corporate culture. It's also impossible to have a good corporate culture without strong communication and teamwork.

So how do you help multi-disciplinary, multifunction healthcare teams learn the same

language? You bring all the clinical disciplines to the table to collaborate and learn — and use common training program content to put everyone on the same page.

Colleagues are empowered to identify their own problems and create real solutions. Focus is placed on issues that cause friction as well as having the team recognize the common frustrations they want to fix.

One of the most crucial elements for success is the development of an interdisciplinary language

that transcends the dialects of each healthcare discipline. Having a common playbook is part of a process that helps the unit develop into a high performing team that demonstrates excellence in communication and teamwork.

Standardizing the language that physicians, nurses, midwives and other unit staff speak is a powerful step in improving outcomes. This puts patient safety squarely where it belongs - as the priority and as everyone's responsibility.



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