



COMMUNICATION SKILLS TO OPTIMIZE PATIENT CARE: A NOVEL CPD INNOVATION

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Background

Literature shows diverse cultures and languages, informed patients, more team-based care, scarce resources among other related factors can create communication challenges between physicians and their patients or colleagues. In response, the University of British Columbia's Division of Continuing Professional Development (UBC CPD) created an accessible CPD course for physicians in BC to enhance their communication skills and ultimately improve patient care.

Summary of the Innovation

A full-day, multi-professional course was facilitated by two communication experts who understood the clinical challenges faced by healthcare professionals. Whereas most communication courses focus on a particular situation such as delivering bad news, this course teaches a simple framework adaptable to a variety of clinical situations. Through personal case study practice with peers, participants were given the opportunity to share insights, successes, and challenges in a safe learning environment. To support ongoing learning and reinforce application, post-program activities were incorporated including a peer check-in at 3-weeks and coaching session at 6-weeks. Data was collected directly onsite post-workshop and 12 weeks post-workshop (reflection activity).

Conclusion

Four courses were offered to 74 participants from across BC (43 family physicians, 21 specialists, and 10 other healthcare professionals). Onsite evaluation data revealed 84% (54/64) of participants reported increased knowledge of effective communication skills and 90% (58/64) reported confidence in their ability to apply the framework to practice. The reflection activity indicated an increased sense of satisfaction in day-to-day clinical interactions. The data suggests that this program was effective in optimizing communication skills for physicians and other healthcare professionals.

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