Essential Front Desk Skills That Guarantee Success

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Front Desk 101

A Primer for New Front Desk Staff

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Objectives

• The importance of the front desk job

• Overview of the foundational skills needed for success
  • Professionalism
  • Communication
  • Basic healthcare knowledge
  • Basic technology knowledge

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The Profession of Medicine

- Physicians are trained to deliver quality care with a commitment to ethical principles and values.
- Those who work in medicine (doctors, nurses, etc.) are regarded by the public and their peers as professionals.
- Healthcare workers are the most trusted profession
- Healthcare professional's performance is good, polished and of high quality

"A professional is someone who can do his best work when he doesn't feel like it"

Alistair Cooke, American Journalist

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Skill Set

SKILLS

Mind Set

Tool Set

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Front Office Fundamental Skills

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Your Role Is Important

- You are the first and lasting impression
- The way you handle a situation determines a patients view of the practice
- You are often the only member of the billing process the patient has contact with

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Professionalism

Dress, hygiene, appearance
Receptive to new ideas: keep an open mind
View problems as opportunities
Multi-task
Concentrate in chaos
Good memory

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Create a connection, not a transaction

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Facts we know:
- Trust comes from staff competence
- Staff attitudes - main contributor to a positive moment of truth
- One third of patients will switch - "ideal experience"
- Patients value - multiple services in one location

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What Patients Want
(Perceptions are Based on Non-Clinical Elements)

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"A brand is a living entity, and it is enriched or undermined cumulatively over time, the product of a thousand small gestures."

Michael Eisner
Former CEO, Disney

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Communication

- Communication is a connection between people
- Too often communication is taken for granted
- Four factors affecting the communication experience:
  - Dynamic
  - Continuous
  - Irreversible
  - Contextual

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Communication With Patients

- The message we send is not necessarily the message received
- It is impossible NOT to communicate
- Every message has both content and feeling
- Non-verbal cues are more believable than verbal cues

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Healthcare Consumerism

PATIENT RETENTION

**Staff Attitude Sways Consumers' Decisions
About Their Providers**

Percent of Consumers Attributing Positive
Moments of Truth to Friendly Staff:

70%	38%	33%
Providers	Retail	Airline, Banking & Hotels

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Communication

- Face to face communication-in person
  - 7% words
  - 38% tone of voice
  - 55% body language
- Phone communication
  - 16% words
  - 84% tone of voice
  - 0% body language

55%
BODY LANGUAGE

WORDS 7%

38%
TONALITY

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Barriers to Communication

| Physical | Perceptual | Emotional |

| Cultural | Language | Gender |

| Interpersonal | Education |

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Results of Communication Barriers

Effect of Behaviors

- On Individuals
- On Organizations
- On Organizational Culture

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Breaking Communication Barriers

Constant pursuit of
self-improvement

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Patient Centered Care is at the Heart of Improving Communications

"Patient centered care is providing care that is respectful of and responsive to individual patient preferences, needs and values and ensuring that patient values guide all clinical decisions."

Institute of Medicine

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Effective Communication Skills

Active Lisenting	Friendliness	Confidence
Giving and Receiving Feedback	Empathy	Respect
Responsiveness	Adapting your communication style to your audience	

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Non Verbal Elements of Communication
"Your body is talking even when your mouth is shut"

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Basic Healthcare Knowledge

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Medical Terminology

- The study of terms used in the art and science of medicine
- It is the universal language of medicine
- It is a functional language which means health care workers use this language to communicate among all health care careers
- Medical terminology is a new set of vocabulary words introduced into "your world"

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Why Do I Need To Know Anatomy and Medical Terminology…..

Be informed as a medical practice professional

To be able to explain clearly and inform patients

Gain a working knowledge to effectively fulfill your duties in a medical setting

Ability to recognize and learn new terms when you encounter them in the future

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Understanding Insurance, Billing, and Point of Service Collections

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Educating Patients

- Elements of a comprehensive financial policy
  - Insurance companies you're contracted with
  - Time of service collections
  - Patient financial responsibility
  - Uninsured or non-covered services
  - Referrals
  - Worker's Comp, personal injury & auto
  - Collections
  - Fees to complete forms
  - Statements
  - No-shows
  - Contact information for billing questions

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Educating Patients

- Set expectations for patient payment
- Financial counselor
- Care Credit
- Check in kiosk
- Credit card on file

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Did You Know….?

- 70% of patients want to pay their bill online
- 63% of patients will make payments
- More than half of patients are willing to pay at least some of what they owe at the point of care using a credit card

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Steps for Successful Front End Revenue Cycle

Eligibility and verification of benefits

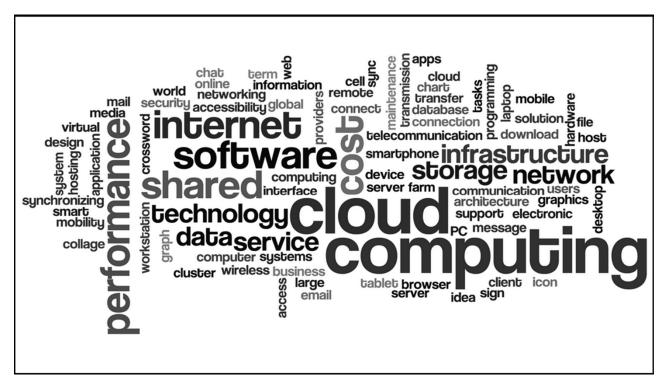Ability to explain to the patient

Work from a financial policy

Offer credit card on file or other payment plan strategies

Understanding of insurance requirements (pre auth, pre-cert, ABN's,

Price transparency

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Pre-Visit Technology

- Patient registration
- Patient portal
- Reminder calls
- Eligibility & benefit verification

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Check-In/Check-Out Technology

- Insurance card scanning
- Process payments by credit card, HSA/FSA cards and checks
- Secure storage of credit card info
- Automatic credit card payment schedules
- Kiosk check-in

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Follow-Up Technology

- Patient portal to accept payment
- Deliver statement electronically via text message reminders
- On line bill pay using a phone app
- Collection efforts

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Regulatory Issues for Front Office Professionals

- HIPAA
- Confidentiality
- Corporate Compliance
- Regulations on treating minors
- Potential liability risks
- Legal requirements of payers

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HIPAA

- Privacy
- Transactions and code sets
- Security

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HIPAA Basics

- The privacy regulation serves 3 distinct purposes:
- Confidentiality of patient's protected health information.

- Defines how patient's and others can obtain access to the protected health information.

- Federal protection of patients protected health information with over-site from Office of Civil Rights

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Privacy is Really About…

- Professional responsibility
  - Minimum necessary
  - Incidental disclosure
  - Appropriate access
- Ethical duty
  - Patient's perceptions
  - Honoring patients' expectations
  - Maintaining office integrity

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State Law- Minors

- Exceptions to the General rule of parental consent:
- When a minor seeks treatment for drug abuse or addiction
- When a minor seeks an exam for venereal disease (A physician may inform parent without consent of minor)
- When a minor is or has been married

IF …. THEN…

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Corporate Compliance

…Is the process of making sure your company and employees follow the laws, regulations, standards, and ethical practices that apply to your organization

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Payer Regulatory Requirements

- Will be different in every state
- Will depend on your payer contracts
- Based on services you provide
  - Be familiar with payer policies
  - Understand Medicare (other Federal Payers) Policies

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