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PATIENT MANAGEMENT STRATEGY



Distinguishing the Components of Highly-Effective Patient Compliance

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Today, more than ever, there is an urgent need to improve the health, healing, and wellbeing of people, patients, families, and communities in America. Responsible for about seventy percent (70%) of deaths each year, chronic disease and patient conditions are the most common, most costly challenges we face in medicine. They include heart disease, diabetes, obesity, cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), asthma, arthritis, and stroke which account for approximately eighty-five percent (85%) of our nation's healthcare expenses. What's more, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports about fifty percent (50%) of American adults have at least one chronic disease and nearly one-third of them have multiple conditions. And yet, chronic disease and patient conditions caused by lifestyle choices are perhaps the most preventable healthcare challenges we face.

Because many chronic diseases share several of the same causes, there are similar preventative and therapeutic interventions and strategies that can prevent disease, can lessen the severity of disease, can effectively manage the disease, can reduce risk behaviors, and can support healthy choices and behaviors. Clearly, prevention is more preferable to healing or managing disease; the emphasis in health care needs to be on advancing the health and wellbeing of people by *preventing disease*. However, with the steady increase of unfavorable lifestyle choices and their ensuing diseases in America, the emphasis in health care is not focused as much on prevention as it is on *healing or managing disease* so as to lessen the severity of disease and further prevent complications and comorbidities.

While preventative health care is concerned with maintaining health and wellbeing and therapeutic health care is concerned with restoring health and wellbeing, both preventative and therapeutic health care require people and patients to be active in and responsible for their health; preventative and therapeutic health care require people and patients to make healthy choices and take healthy actions. This paper is about distinguishing the *Components of Patient Compliance* that engender highly-effective patient compliance.

THE NATURE OF COMPLIANCE AND NONCOMPLIANCE

Patient compliance, whether it is preventative or therapeutic in nature, is a state of engagement, activation, and persistence in which the patient effectively and efficiently manages their health, healing, and wellbeing. For patient compliance to be effective and efficient, the patient must be interested and involved in their life and engaged in their care and care plan. Besides being engaged, the patient must also be moved to take actions consistent with their care plan and the patient must be determined, committed, and persistent in achieving optimal outcomes. In their engagement, activation, and persistence, the patient chooses to follow the care provider's instructions and recommendations set forth in the care plan and takes actions consistent with those instructions and recommendations.

In direct contrast to compliance, patient noncompliance is the result of adverse conditions, circumstances, or events, called barriers, which arise with the patient. Impeding patient choices and actions, barriers constrain, obstruct, and thwart patient compliance. Besides concerns associated with unfavorable patient confidence and self-efficacy, noncompliance is often a matter of contrary patient thoughts and feelings, beliefs and opinions, judgements and viewpoints, attitudes and principles, regarding their care and care plan, care provider and care team, and their own self-care. In essence, noncompliance arises with adverse patient perceptions and preferences about their health, healing, and wellbeing which can occur, as we know, at any time with a patient for any number of reasons.

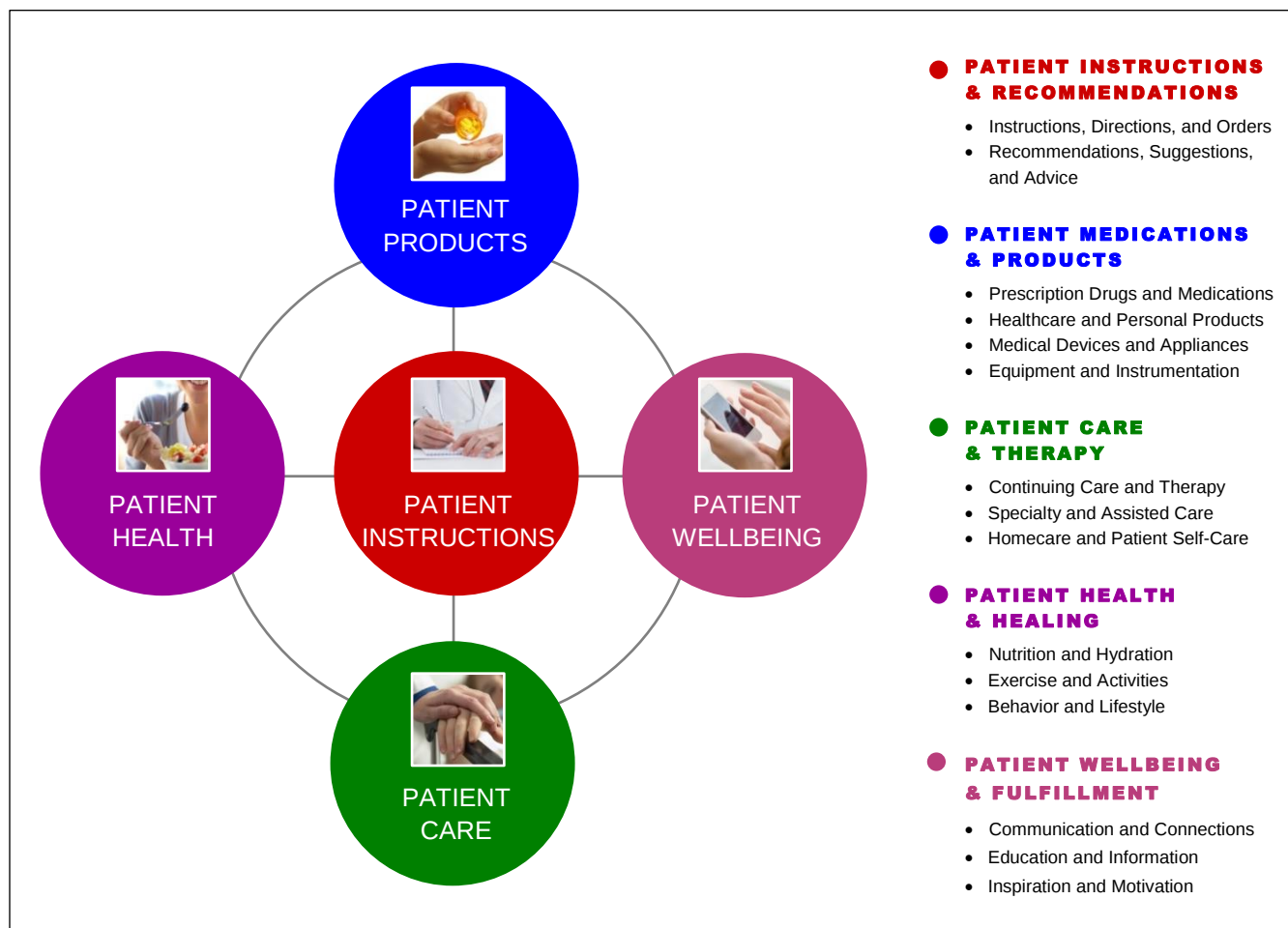
THE NATURE OF COMPLIANCE COMPONENTS

Based on the patient's diagnosis, disease, and prognosis, based on the patient's physical condition and emotional state, and based on overall treatment goals, the care provider plans, organizes, directs, and administers the care plan for managing the patient and their care with the ultimate intention of advancing patient compliance and achieving optimal outcomes. The *Components of Patient Compliance* are actually the elements that comprise the patient's care plan; they help make patient care more comprehensive and complete while they also enhance patient engagement, activation, and persistence for patient compliance.

In view of that, the patient's care plan establishes the elements of patient self-care with patient instructions, medications, tests, continuing care, medical devices, appointments, specialized care, recommendations, ongoing examinations, physical therapy, homecare services, and much more. No wonder the care plan can be totally overwhelming and unquestionably confusing to the patient. Studies regularly document patient perceptions and preferences for wanting their self-care to be easy and simple, quick and convenient, safe and effective, and free of pain and anxiety, as well as other voiced concerns. On the whole, many of these preferences relate to patient confidence and self-efficacy; patient ability to comprehend, understand, and learn; patient ability to remember and retain; patient perceptions of time and convenience; and patient quality of life.

THE COMPONENTS OF PATIENT COMPLIANCE

In an effort to synthesize and crystallize what can be a complex and confusing care plan for the patient as well as the care provider and care team, the *Components of Patient Compliance* distinguish five categories of patient self-care matters or areas of clinical focus. The five categories of patient compliance components are: one, Patient Instructions and Recommendations; two, Patient Medications and Products; three, Patient Care and Therapy; four, Patient Health and Healing; and five, Patient Wellbeing and Fulfillment.



At the center of the care plan, the first component focuses on the instructions and recommendations of the patient's care plan. Since instructions and recommendations are fundamental to the plan, the patient needs to take actions based on them to be compliant and, as such, the other *Components of Patient Compliance* support, sustain, and reinforce those instructions and recommendations. It follows, then, that the second component focuses on patient medications and healthcare products that are used by the patient in their care plan while the third component focuses on ongoing patient care and therapy to ensure patient treatment is continuous with primary and secondary providers and, as required, specialized, extended, or home care is provided, as appropriate, as well. The fourth component of compliance focuses on the patient's overall health involving nutrition, exercise, activities, behavioral modification, and lifestyle enhancements while the fifth component focuses on the patient's overall wellbeing by providing ongoing patient programs, services, and support; patient communications and connections; patient information, education, and motivation.

1. PATIENT INSTRUCTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Patient Instructions and Recommendations define the care plan; they provide the patient with guidance and direction, understanding and purpose for their self-care; for their taking prescription drugs and medications; for their using healthcare products and devices; for their continuing care and ongoing therapies; for their achieving health, healing, and wellbeing; for attaining optimal outcomes.

Before further discussion regarding this first component of compliance, we must make a distinction between Instructions and Recommendations. On the one hand, Instructions are the directions and orders of the care provider which the patient *must follow* while, on the other hand, Recommendations are the advice and suggestions the patient *should follow* in anticipation of enhancing outcomes and wellbeing. Instructions are usually taken as compulsory orders while Recommendations are usually taken as optional suggestions.

Often, Instructions and Recommendations are not differentiated and, as such, are collapsed into a single set of directions. Although Instructions and Recommendations are correspondingly important to patient health and healing, the patient and care provider tend to focus more on Instructions rather than Recommendations since they provide a greater, more direct, and obvious influence over healing and managing the disease. While the patient is more likely to follow Instructions, typically the patient is not overly inclined to obey their care provider's advice to eat sensibly and exercise more. Yet, both Instructions and Recommendations are indisputably important to the overall health, healing, and wellbeing of the patient. If the care provider, in fact, considers their Recommendations, suggestions, and advice important to healing and the patient's ability to manage their disease, the patient not only needs to follow Instructions but the patient also needs to adhere to the care provider's Recommendations in order to be fully compliant.

As we know, it is important to provide complete and comprehensive Instructions and Recommendations to the patient in a manner that is clear, simple, and easy to follow; Instructions and Recommendations that provide a schedule of patient events and actions replete with patient prompts and reminders and patient appointments as well. Just as important, the care provider needs to thoroughly review the Instructions and Recommendations with the patient and determine the patient's understanding and willingness to comply.

As appropriate, it is important to also provide any special Instructions and Recommendations for the patient making changes in their lifestyle, habits, behaviors, activities, relationships, and environment as it is also important to provide special Instructions for operating, servicing, storing, and replacing healthcare devices, appliances, instrumentation, and equipment.

Comprehending and understanding, remembering and retaining Instructions and Recommendations are certainly important to the patient and care plan and yet following them is only part of compliance; it is equally and decisively important the patient takes actions consistent with those Instructions and Recommendations.

2. PATIENT MEDICATIONS AND PRODUCTS

The second component of compliance is *Patient Medications and Products*. Patient care plans naturally require instructions and recommendations as they also usually require medications and other products. Patient Medications and Products often include prescription drugs and medications, healthcare products and personal products, medical devices and appliances, equipment and instrumentation, and other patient necessities.

Patient Medications and Products contained in the care plan literally include any and all products, technologies, and tools the care provider determines appropriate for the patient in their health, healing, and wellbeing. Accordingly, Patient Medications and Products may include oxygen therapy, nutritional supplements, wound care management products, therapeutic clothing and shoes, special soaps and shampoos, hospital bed and air mattress, healthcare technology and apps, body moisturizers and lotions, and more.

In addition to prescribing medications and patient products in the patient's care plan, it is important, as we know, to explain their use. Accordingly, patient products require healthcare professionals to provide product information and demonstrations for helping the patient to understand their medications and products and how to use them correctly. Patient instructions, therefore, need to address indications for use, contraindications, dosing, precautions, warnings, and other prescription drug and medication information; they need to also address the purchase, storage, care, use, application, replacement, refill, replenishment, cleaning, sterilization, and disposal of products, equipment, devices, appliances, instruments, and other patient necessities.

While the patient and their care provider usually focus their conversations on prescription drug and medication instructions for use, we can understand why the patient also requires comprehensive and complete information, instructions, and training for the application of healthcare products and personal products, the use of medical devices and appliances, the operation of instrumentation and equipment, the care, cleansing, and dressing of wounds, and information for other needs. Patient Medications and Products are an important part of Patient Instructions and Recommendations; they contribute to patient self-care for achieving patient compliance.

3. PATIENT CARE AND THERAPY

As a complement to patient Instructions and Recommendations and Patient Medications and Products, the third distinction is *Patient Care and Therapy*. Care plans for the patient who is dealing with a chronic illness always involve ongoing care. Patient Care and Therapy require the patient, first, to accurately follow their Instructions and Recommendations; second, to accurately take their drugs and medications and / or to accurately use their

products, devices, appliances, equipment, and instrumentation as prescribed; and third, to accurately monitor and measure the effectiveness of their self-care.

Accordingly, Patient Care and Therapy require ongoing examinations for patient check-ups and follow-ups as well as ongoing tests, screenings, and other diagnostics to continually and constantly determine patient performance and progress; to determine patient compliance. For those reasons, ongoing Patient Care and Therapy also require patient scheduling, appointments, transportation, and other services as well as prescription fills and refills, product purchases and replenishment, device and appliance fitting and adjustments, equipment ordering and operation, and other patient preparation and planning for their ongoing care.

Often, Patient Care and Therapy involve the need for the patient to secure additional care from other specialists, providers, and clinicians as well as therapists, dietitians, trainers, counselors, coaches, facilitators, and other healthcare professionals. In view of that, Patient Care and Therapy not only involve continuing the patient's primary and secondary care but it may well involve other specialized care and therapies, patient regimens and programs, alternate care, extended care, and homecare services and support. Patient Care and Therapy are an important part of Patient Instructions and Recommendations; they contribute to the patient's continuing care and self-care for thoroughly and carefully managing their condition.

4. PATIENT HEALTH AND HEALING

The fourth component of compliance focuses on providing a comprehensive approach to *Patient Health and Healing* as part of a more comprehensive and complete care plan. As we know, care plans not only address Patient Instructions and Recommendations, Patient Medications and Products, and Patient Care and Therapy, they also need to address the general physical health, healing, and vitality of the patient, their condition, strength, fitness, energy, and overall healthiness.

Patient Health and Healing comprise recommendations, suggestions, and advice regarding patient diet, nutrition, and hydration which might well include nutritional guidance, planning menus, and directing diets as well as monitoring intake and measuring nutritional uptake with blood, urine, and saliva tests. Patient Health and Healing recommendations might also involve recommendations for nutraceuticals, food additives, and dietary supplements like vitamins, minerals, amino acids, herbal products, isolated nutrients, and other products.

Patient Health and Healing might also involve recommendations for the patient to seek other forms of patient care including eye and dental care. Other recommendations might also involve those for personal hygiene and body care advising the patient to use specific products like lotions, cleansers, sprays, washes, creams, gels, ointments, and products for skin, hair, eye, ear, sinus, dental, and other applications. Still, other recommendations might involve those for the patient to wear or use certain therapeutic clothing and shoes, personal and household items, eyewear, and items related to their activity, rest, sleep, work, play, and travel. Finally, Patient Health and Healing advice might involve \ recommendations for the patient to make changes or adjustments to their home or work setting, their location, environment, and climate.

Besides recommendations related to nutrition, hydration, physical care, and personal hygiene, Patient Health and Healing comprise recommendations, suggestions, and advice regarding patient activity and exercise which might well include physical exercise and activities of daily living; supervised therapeutic exercise programs; and participation in regimens for fitness, aerobics, yoga, calisthenics, resistance training, and other forms of exercise. And yet Patient Health and Healing also involve recommendations for rest and relaxation, sleep, and restrictions on patient activity; plus, it might also involve relaxation exercises, stress and time management, massage therapy, meditation, cognitive behavioral practices, and other forms of mental, spiritual, and physical practices appropriate to the patient's physical condition and emotional state.

In addition to proposals for nutrition and exercise, Patient Health and Healing comprise recommendations and suggestions or, in some particular instances, instructions and orders regarding patient habits, behaviors, and lifestyle choices – involving drugs, alcohol, tobacco, food, and other substances – which would necessitate patient participation in behavioral modification and cessation programs, detoxification and addiction treatment, therapy and rehabilitation, or other patient programs, services, and support for addressing their harmful, unhealthy, and often destructive habits, obsessions, compulsions, and dependencies. Every so often, patient habits, behaviors, and lifestyle choices adversely affect patient compliance with their care plan and require serious attention and resolution.

Typically, Patient Health and Healing require some forms of patient education, information, and training for their attentive participation in diet and nutrition, exercise and activities, behavior and lifestyle; and frequently requires nutritionists and dietitians, trainers and coaches, addiction specialists and counselors, pharmacists and other healthcare professionals to support the patient. In view of that, Patient Health and Healing often require various forms of patient monitoring, measuring, and managing nutritional and physical activities.

Although they are often treated as suggestions rather than orders, Patient Health and Healing are clearly an important part of Patient Instructions and Recommendations; nonetheless, they evidently contribute to the patient's self-care in managing their condition and achieving health and healing.

5. PATIENT WELLBEING AND FULFILLMENT

Patient Wellbeing and Fulfillment, the fifth component of compliance, focuses on the emotional, intellectual, and spiritual wellness and satisfaction of the patient. It offers communication and connection; it offers continuing patient information, education, and motivation as well as other services and support to help ensure patient ease, comfort, contentment, and compliance.

Patient Wellbeing and Fulfillment offer ongoing communication, connectivity, and a network of supportive relationships inviting the patient to be part of a *care circle*, comprised of loved ones, family members, friends, clergy, and other caring and supportive individuals; and, as appropriate, inviting the patient to be part of a *care community*, comprised of other patients experiencing similar conditions and disease states and comprised of healthcare professionals as well. As we know, ongoing dialogue is critical to compliance for patients to follow the care pathway and to be persistent. Accordingly, patient connections, relations, and communications are essential for long-term results.

What's more, Patient Wellbeing and Fulfillment focus attention on patient comfort, safety, security, and welfare by appraising, acknowledging, and reinforcing their healthy choices and behaviors, their healthy habits and lifestyles, their healthy ways of living and being. Patient satisfaction and fulfillment are underscored with patient acknowledgement, appreciation, and recognition for their commitment and achievement. Accordingly, Patient Wellbeing and Fulfillment focus attention on helping the patient enhance their beliefs and desires for health, healing and wellbeing; helping the patient expand their decision-making and self-care abilities; helping the patient increase their independence; and helping the patient improve their quality of life. To that end, patient responsibility, resilience, confidence, and commitment, as elements of Patient Wellbeing and Fulfillment, are distinctly an important part of Patient Instructions and Recommendations and are therefore, decisive with the patient and care plan in achieving patient compliance.

SUMMARY

In summary, patient compliance involves a number of important considerations regarding the patient's care plan which go well beyond patient instructions, directions, and orders, beyond recommendations, suggestions, and advice. The patient's care plan obviously involves prescription drugs and medications, healthcare and personal products, medical devices and appliances, equipment and instrumentation. It also involves ongoing patient care, patient therapies, patient nutrition and exercise, patient activity and behaviors, patient communication and connectivity, patient information and education, patient inspiration and motivation. All these things contribute to the patient care plan; all these things are the components of highly-effective patient compliance for advancing patient health, healing, and wellbeing, for achieving optimal patient outcomes.

The organization and arrangement, the design and structure of the Components of Patient Compliance helps the care provider and care team to simplify and manage the care plan making it easy, simple, and expedient for the patient. The design and structure make it convenient also for the care provider and care team to focus on areas of the care plan that need attention; for example; patient challenges with understanding their instructions and recommendations; patient challenges with using their medications or healthcare products; patient challenges with their ongoing care or special therapy; patient challenges with their exercise or diet, and so forth. What's more, the design and structure makes it straightforward for the care provider and care team to ascertain patient barriers and adverse behaviors helping them to effectively and efficiently manage the patient for compliance; for advancing patient health, healing, and wellbeing; for achieving optimal clinical, economic, management, and patient satisfaction outcomes.