



teaming for **SUCCESS**

by Joan Fox

One single fact trumps all others when it comes to the ability to deliver an exceptional patient experience. Simply put, we cannot give what we do not have. It is impossible to make patients feel served if the internal culture is not one of respect, trust, open communication, support, and accountability. In other words, a team-based culture where people are truly working together is most likely to achieve an exceptional patient experience.

Team is a word thrown around and discussed as if it were common and easy. The opposite is true. Most organizations run as a series of departments (which operate like compartments),

“We are born for cooperation, as are the feet, the hands, the eyelids, and the upper and lower jaws.” —Marcus Aurelius

committees, and isolated entities. Within each of these, there is a hierarchy of power and responsibility, blaming behaviors when things don't get done, and a tendency to self-preserve. It is no wonder large organizations consistently struggle in delivering exceptional patient experiences.

But it can be done. Let's examine how to be a better team by taking responsibility to be a better teammate.

Demonstrate Respect

- Respect means listening to and actually considering a co-worker's viewpoint.
- Respect means not retelling the personal story a co-worker just told you.
- Respect means supporting co-workers through your job even though you don't personally like them.

Communicate Better

- Effective co-worker communication is adult communication—not adult to child.
- Effective co-worker communication is respectful, complete, and open.
- Effective communication includes “nice to know” facts as well as “need to know” information.

Be Accountable

- Take ownership for your mistakes as well as your achievements.
- Abide by the best practices as set forth by the organization even though you may not agree.
- Do your job to the best of your ability every single day.

Partner with the Patient in Mind

- See yourself and what you do as a piece of the patient satisfaction puzzle.

- Understand that your efforts working with a difficult person will have positive patient consequences.
- Know that even if you never interact directly with a patient, what you do and how you do it affects each patient directly.

Great teams give stellar performances because of the lengths to which they are willing to go. They do their jobs and then some.

And Then Some

- Go beyond your job and help out a co-worker.
- Play the part of encourager. We all need it.
- Be the person people look to for positive perspective.
- Think about what someone needs before they actually need it.
- Smile more.
- Choose to be the person your department would be lost without.
- Be the role model for good work ethic.

What would your work day be like if every person you work with embraced the responsibility to be a good teammate? What would your work day be like if you embraced the responsibility to be a good teammate? Better, I bet—much, much better.

