

Barriers

Communication is usually affected by a number of interference or barriers. These barriers affected the accuracy of the communication exchange, when you try to communicate with someone. Some issues are rather obvious, while others are not. Some are easily removed, while others are more complex and required multiple strategies to minimize their impact. To minimizing communication barriers typically required a two-stage process:

1. You must be aware that they exist.
2. You need to take appropriate action to overcome them.

Environmental barriers:

The environment in which communication take place in critical in pharmacy practice and distractions within the environment often interfere with this process. These barriers including:

1. The height of prescription counter separating patient from pharmacy personal and the reasons for present of these counter are:
 - They provide an opportunity for patient to identify where the pharmacy is located.
 - They provide an opportunity for pharmacy staff to look over the store area periodically.
 - They provide a private area in which the staff can work.

Note: ideally, you and the patient should be at eye level to enhance verbal and non-verbal communication.

2. Crowded: many pharmacies tend to have significant background noise such as people talking or music playing. These noises

interfere with your ability to communicate with the patient. In addition, other people may be within hearing range of your conversation which limits the level of perceived privacy for interaction.

Note: in noisy environment, privacy can be enhanced by moving to the end of prescription counter or by turning away from busy prescription area and lowering your voice to achieve more private environment.

Finding private locations (like French-type door or glass window) are required to have meaningful discussion with nurses, physicians, and other health care. These types of communication should be out of hearing range of family member, patient and other non-medication care.

Potential pharmacist-related personal barriers:

1. **Low self-confidence** lack of confidence in your personal ability to communicate effectively may influence how you communicate.
2. **Shyness:** individual with high levels of shyness tend to avoid interpersonal communication in most situation, including interaction with patients, physicians, or other health care providers like the inability to speak a second language.
3. **Dysfunction internal monologue:** the internal conversation you may have within yourself while talking with other and this may limit your ability to listen effectively as you focus on your thought rather than on what the other person is saying lead to prejudging conclusion about the perceived problem and suggested solution.
4. **Lack of objectivity:** while talking care of patients, you may be tempted to take on the emotion problems of patients and many patient whom you will serve have multiple, complex problem, and

you may be enticed to help them resolve emotional as well as physical issues.

5. **Cultural differences:** culturally based factors may also serve as personal barriers to effective communication and other barriers related to culture include:

- Definition of illness (some patients may not perceive themselves to be ill).
- Perceptions of what to do when ill (some cultures stress self-reliance rather than seeking help).
- Health-related habits or customs (eating habits).
- Health-seeking behavior (some culture place more reliance on folk medicine).
- Perceptions of health care providers (based on possible distrust of the health care system or past negative experiences).

6. **Discomfort in sensitive situations:** in cancer cases, patient fears or anxieties may put tremendous pressure on you to "say the right thing" and cause you to avoid interacting with others.

7. **Negative perceptions about the value of patient interaction:** many pharmacies believe that talking with patient is not a high-priority activity, unlike personal introspection and analysis of one's motivation and desire to communicate.

Patient-related personal barriers:

1. **Negative patient perception:** if patient perceive you as not being knowledgeable or trustworthy, they will tend not to ask questions or listen to the advice being offered. On other hand, if patient

perceive you as being knowledgeable and have positive experiences in the past talking with pharmacists.

- 2. Hinders communication:** patients may believe that health care system is impersonal, some patients may feel that their physicians would have told them everything about their condition and their medication. Therefore, there is no need to talk with you.

Administrative barriers:

- Difficult to type a label, count medication, talk on the phone and complete other necessary dispensing tasks while trying to communicate with patient.
- Pharmacists desire to answer every phone call, which may give the impression to patient that the pharmacist does not want to talk him or her.
- Staffing policies: many pharmacies reduced the number of staff members who can assist pharmacists, unlike, sufficient staff support provide more time for pharmacist to offer enhanced patient care.

Time barriers:

Choosing an inappropriate time to initiate conversation may lead to communication failure for example, a woman who just comes from a physician's office after waiting for 3 hours with two sick children may not be interested in talking with you or anyone.

Suggested question

- 1- What are the potential pharmacist-related personal barriers?**
- 2- What are the Patient-related personal barriers?**
- 3- What are the administrative barriers?**
- 4- What are the time barriers?**
- 5- What are the environmental barriers?**