

# PROFESSIONALISM IN THE WORKPLACE

## 1 Hour Course

How each of your staff interacts with patients on the telephone and in person, along with their personal appearance, is a reflection of the professionalism of the practice. In this seminar we will discuss telephone etiquette, professional behavior with the patient, personal etiquette in the office, office decorum (behavior between co-workers and behavior between staff and patients), and personal appearance/hygiene.

### Learning Objectives:

1. How to be professional with patients
2. How to be professional with other staff members
3. How to look and appear professional

#### I. Introduction

1 Min.

A. We should all strive to be professional in our appearance, work ethic, knowledge, and demeanor.

B. We want to be treated as a professional

#### II. Telephone Etiquette

4 Min.

A. First contact patient has with your practice

B. Make a good first impression

C. Practice good phone skills

1. Greet the patient
2. Identify the practice
3. Identify yourself
4. How can you assist them
5. Make sure your smile shows through on the phone

#### III. Professionalism With The Patient

10 Min.

A. Make a good impression as soon as they walk into the office

1. Smile and make eye contact
2. Acknowledge every person
3. Never let them stand and wait without an acknowledgement
4. Greet them with "Good morning" or "Good afternoon"
5. Call them by name if known

B. Pre-Tester calls the patient back by name

1. Introduce yourself

2. When they seat the patient for the doctor, tell them the doctor's name as a form of introduction.
- C. The doctor, upon entering the exam room, should greet the patient.
  1. Call the patient by name
  2. If a new patient, introduce yourself
  3. Shake their hand
- D. Doctor passes the patient off to the optician
  1. Introduce the optician
  2. Let the patient know that the optician will be taking care of all of their optical needs.
- E. Optician receives the patient
  1. Greet and shake the patient's hand
  2. Call them by name
- F. A patient should always be handed off from one staff member to another
  1. Introduce the patient by name
  2. Staff member should receive them with eye contact, smile, and a hand shake.

#### IV. Personal Etiquette In the Office

10 Min.

- A. Personal telephone calls and visits
  1. Emergency basis only
  2. Never talk where you can be overheard by a patient
  3. Never take telephone calls or visits at the expense of a patient's time
- B. Handling Emergency Visits or Calls
  1. Hand off patient to another staff member
  2. Introduce the staff member before you leave
  3. Leaving a patient alone is the biggest complaint on surveys
- C. Patients in the reception area are listening to everything going on around them while they are waiting.
  1. Patients should not have to listen to staff talk on personal telephone calls.
    - a) Keep conversations between staff professional
    - b) Never disclose information about another patient
    - c) No derogatory conversations about another staff member
    - d) Never cast doubt about another staff member's ability.
    - e) Negativity makes you look just as unprofessional as the person you may be discussing.
  2. Patients should not have to listen to personal conversations between staff and/or personal visits.
    - f) You need to present a unified team

#### V. Behavior Between Co-Workers

- A. Conduct yourself in a mature, professional manner when interacting with other staff members.

- B. Proper Way to address problems
1. Problems should be addressed in a private setting out of ear-shot of patients.
  2. There is no place loud talking, arguing, cursing, or physical displays of anger.
  3. Handle problems promptly and properly. Never allow time for problem to escalate.
  4. If the problem cannot be handled one on one, take it to the office manager or doctor.
  5. If the situation becomes heated or explosive, step away and compose yourself.

VI. Behavior Between Staff and Patients

10 Min.

A. Disgruntled and/or Dissatisfied Patients

1. Staff usually hate these situations and approach them accordingly
2. This is actually an opportunity to shine
3. Turn it into a positive instead of a negative experience
4. **Listen** attentively to their complaint
5. Do not interrupt the patient while they are describing their complaint
6. Restate their problem to them to make sure you understand
7. If you are not able to help them with their problem, place them in contact with the proper staff member
8. Never get a confrontational attitude
9. Most patients just want to know that you are concerned with their problem and that someone is going to work with them to solve the problem.

VII. Personal Appearance and Hygiene

15 Min.

A. A direct affect on professional perception

B. Come to work looking your best

1. How you look determines how you will be treated
2. If you do not care enough about yourself to look your best, how can you care about a patient?

C. Personal hygiene is very important since you will be working in close proximity to the patient.

1. Each person should smell clean and fresh each day
2. Shower and use deordant
3. Brush your teeth before coming to work
4. If possible, keep a toothbrush at the office and brush your teeth after lunch
5. If brushing after lunch is not practical or possible, Mouthwash can be substituted
6. Never chew gum while working with patients
7. Breath mints can be allowed

D. Hair

1. Hair should be clean and styled
2. The color and style should not be distracting
3. Strive for a professional look that is becoming to you

E. Make-up

1. Should be worn tastefully
2. Should not draw undue attention

F. Clothing

1. Scrubs should be clean and wrinkle-free
2. If you wear a shirt beneath the scrub top, it should not extend below the bottom of the scrub top at the waistline.
3. Tennis shoes should be clean and in good condition
4. Personal clothes should be business attire that is color coordinated, clean and pressed
5. Shoes should be darker than your hemline and hosiery should be lighter than your hemline.

G. Jewelry

1. Tastefully selected
2. Compliments your clothes
3. No noisy, rattling jewelry should be worn since it can be very distracting
4. Male staff members should remove any earrings upon entering the office
5. Any staff member with body piercings, other than ears, such as eyebrows, tongue, nose, or lips should remove any such jewelry before entering the workplace.

Conclusion:

You are only perceived as professional as you present yourself!!