
Book Review

Communication Skills for Medicine, 3rd Edition

Margaret Lloyd and Robert Boyd. New York: Churchill Livingstone Elsevier, 2009. ISBN: 9780702030581. 212 pages, \$53.95 USD.

In this 3rd edition, Margaret Lloyd and Robert Boyd provide an updated guide to assist students in learning and developing their communication skills. This text covers a wide range of topics and includes important features such as exercises and cases to encourage students to learn actively. Although written for medical students, chiropractic students and their educators will find this book to be a valuable resource.

The text is divided into 12 chapters, followed by exercises, appendices, related readings, and a thorough index. The first chapter introduces the purpose of the text and the crucial role of communication in the health care encounter. Additionally, the authors describe the critical need to practice and apply the strategies.

Subsequent chapters progress well from basic communication skills to more challenging situations, such as expressing bad news to a patient. Although chiropractors may not be required to communicate news of a terminal diagnosis on a regular basis, learning to handle such situations will likely assist students and practitioners when patients share news or require assistance understanding a diagnosis or test results.

Chapters regarding communication with specific populations are included with helpful recommendations. These chapters range from communicating with anxious or angry patients, patients from another culture, as well as children and family members. One of the strengths of this text, and these chapters in particular, is that material is always related to providing the best care possible for the patient. For example, the chapter regarding communicating with patients from a different cultural background goes beyond language difficulties that may arise and encourages students to examine their own world view, determine the patient's perceptions of illness and expectations of treatment, and, when required, find a compromise between the proposed treatment and cultural values. Helpfully, the authors include a number of scenarios to help learners understand and empathize with the difficulties of dealing with an illness in a new environment and provide a variety of case examples to highlight clinical considerations.

The final chapter summarizes the presented material well by addressing professional relationships with both patients and colleagues and includes various forms of communication, such as charts and interprofessional letters. In this era of patient-centered care and interprofessional collaboration, students and clinicians alike will benefit from the information included in this chapter.

Overall, this text is easily readable, with tables and examples to emphasize important information in each chapter. It provides a strong foundation for health professional students to develop their communication skills and could serve as a helpful resource for health educators. Though not a substitute for developing communication skills practically, the design and cost of this text create a thorough and useful resource.

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