



Miscommunication Among Healthcare Professionals in the Hospital Setting: A Quality Improvement Project



Makayla Canchola; Courtney Collins; Carrie Conley; Erin Downey; Benjamin Hutchinson; Jordan Jenkins; Savannah Roades; Lorren Sales; Dr. Suzi White, DNP, MSN, RN, PHCNS, BC, Mentor

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Background

According to Galatzan & Carrington, 2018, “Miscommunication that occurs during the exchange of information between healthcare providers accounts for approximately 80% of adverse events in the healthcare setting”. Miscommunication among healthcare professionals in the workplace continues to be a problem that is not adequately addressed. Miscommunication has a major impact on the quality-of-care patients receive, patient satisfaction, healthcare costs, and patient outcomes. A literature review of 64 studies was conducted and several different types of miscommunication within the healthcare system were identified. These areas include medication errors, miscommunication among patients and/or caregivers and staff, and communication errors in patient handoffs. Language barriers and cultural differences can also have an impact on communication in healthcare. The goal of this intervention is to improve communication among healthcare professionals in the workplace, with the overall goal of improving patient outcomes.

Definition & Purpose Statement

The purpose of this quality improvement project is to determine the effectiveness of communication between healthcare professionals based on renewed SBAR (Situation, Background, Assessment, Recommendation) guidelines for improved handoff communication in the healthcare setting. According to the *Harvard Public Health Review*, “effective communication can be defined as verbal speech or other methods of relaying information in order to get a point across” (Ratna, 2019). Communication among healthcare professionals must be redefined in order to improve patient outcomes.



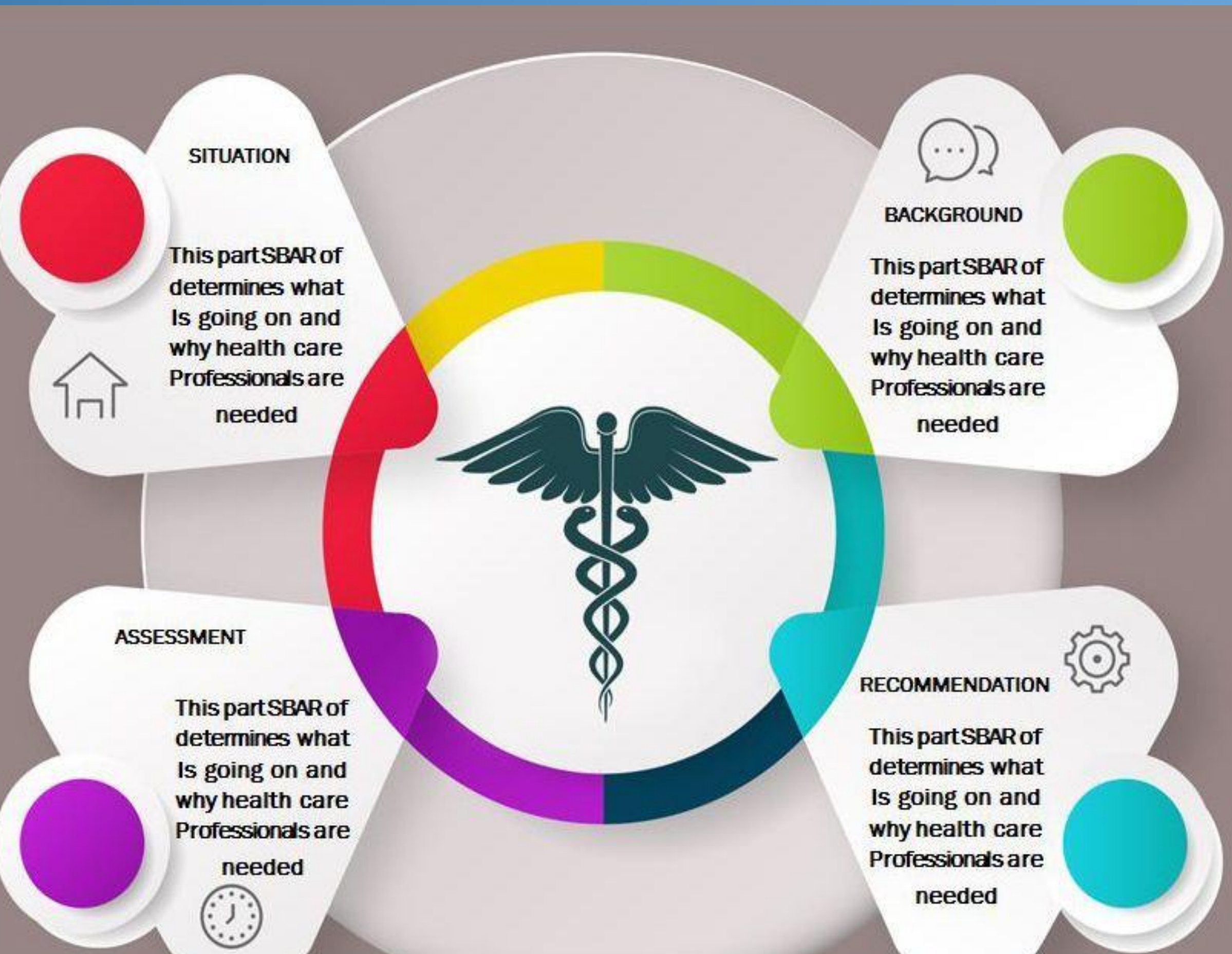
Literature Review

There was a full literature review done examining 64 peer-reviewed research articles covering the topic of communication in the healthcare system. One emerging theme that was noted was that nurses close the gap in communication between physicians, patients, patient’s families and the rest of the healthcare staff when they round with the providers. This theme showed to have positive result with patient satisfaction and dramatically decreased patient errors (Rahman A., 2019). Another theme that was noted was that the implementation of the safety huddle increased effective communication among members of the healthcare team by reducing errors due to miscommunication and supporting a culture of patient safety. This huddle acted as the final safety barrier between nurses coming off shift and nursing coming on shift to create an effective communication to improve patient safety (Kylor, C., 2016). A final theme noted was that the more competent a healthcare professional is at communicating, the more effective patient care is performed, which improved patient satisfactory rates. Nurses are aware that there is inadequate SBAR handoff communication between all members of the healthcare team especially between nurses and their patient’s primary care provider. Poor communication between nurses and physicians showed to be a major cause of patient injury and increased healthcare cost (Forbes III, T. H., Larson, K., Scott, E. S., & Garrison, H. G., 2020).

Implementation - SBAR Checklist

Objectives

- After training about improving communication using the SBAR model handout, health care providers will:
- 1.) Effectively communicate during transfer of patient clinical information from one health care provider to another.
 - 2.) Have improved patient outcomes related to a decrease in miscommunication.
 - 3.) Be able to teach new health care providers on the SBAR communication model.



SBAR Nursing Handoff Template

Patient's last name: _____ Room #: _____
 Age: ___ y/o M / F Patient's barcode #: _____

SITUATION-
 Admission date: _____ () C-Diff () MRSA () VRE
 Today's Date: _____
 Chief complaint/Admitting DX: _____
 Physician: _____ () FULL CODE () DNR
 Allergies: _____
 Advanced directives: _____
 Other: _____

BACKGROUND-
 () COPD () glaucoma () Contact
 () Diabetes; () Type I or () Type II () Arthritis () Beta blocker () Airborne
 () Heart Failure () Osteoporosis () ACE inhibitor () Droplet
 () Hypertension () Cancer; specify: _____
 () Angina () CKD () EF: _____
 () Hypotension () Cirrhosis () Other assessment data:
 () CAD () Hypothyroidism
 () Palpitations () Hypothyroidism
 () Stroke/TIA; date: _____ () Smoker; specify pack/year: _____
 () MI; date: _____ () Mental illness; specify: _____
 () Seizures () Dementia

ASSESSMENT-
 Latest Vital Signs: Frequency: q _____ hours Pain rating on scale 1-10: _____
 BP: _____, HR: _____, Temp: _____, O2 sat: _____, RR: _____, Last pain medication was given at _____

Activity	Neuro	GI/GU
() Ambulates independently	() Alert	() BS present x4 quadrants
() Ambulates with assist of _____	() Oriented	() Last BM: _____
() Bedridden	x1 / x2 / x3	() Incontinent
() RISK FOR FALLS	Respiratory	() Foley
Transfer:	() Regular RR	Date of _____
Insertion:	() Labored	() Nausea
() 2 person assist	() Shallow	() Vomiting
() Draw sheet	() Use of accessory muscles	() Diarrhea
() Hoyer lift	() Abdominal distention	() Abdominal
Skin Integrity	() Intact	() O2 therapy: _____
() Pressure injury;	() Cardiac	Isolation Precautions () None

SBAR Nursing Handoff Template

Location: _____ () Heart rhythm: _____ () Contact Stage: _____ () Beta blocker () Airborne () Lesion: _____ () ACE inhibitor () Droplet Location: _____ () EF: _____ Other assessment data: () Wound care Diet: _____ Q ___h () NPO

Scheduled Medications: _____

Pertinent labs:

WBC	H&H	PLT	PT/INR	Na	K+	BUN	Creatinine	Other

IV () Peripheral Location: _____ Gauge: _____ () Central line () PICC line () Implanted Port	Drains/tubes () JP () NG tube () G-tube () continuous feeding () intermittent feeding () Chest tube	Assistive devices () Glasses () Hearing aid () Walker () Wheelchair () Dentures () Other: _____
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24h I&O: _____ Daily weight: _____ Latest FSBS: _____

RECOMMENDATIONS-
 Recommendations for the patient: _____
 Patient educational needs: _____
 Discharge planning: _____
 Questions from the Receiving Nurse? _____