

Embrace Personhood for Better Patient Care

In the spirit of Harvey Chochinov's emphasis on reminding patients they matter, this month's tip revolves around fostering a deeper connection with patients.

Background

Harvey Chochinov's work highlights the profound impact of acknowledging and addressing the inherent worth of each patient (personhood).

Implementing personhood in your patient care involves recognizing and respecting the unique identity and humanity of everyone receiving medical attention.

This approach acknowledges that patients are not just a collection of symptoms and medical conditions, but are individuals with their own values, preferences, and life stories.

The goal is to provide care that preserves and enhances a patient's sense of personhood, even in the face of illness or challenging circumstances.

Key Elements of Implementing Personhood in Patient Care

- ❖ **Dignity and Respect:** Treating patients with dignity and respect is fundamental. This involves recognizing and valuing the individuality of each patient, irrespective of their health condition.
- ❖ **Wholistic Care:** Person-centered care looks beyond the immediate medical needs of the patient. It takes into consideration the patient's emotional, social, and spiritual well-being. This wholistic approach aims to address all aspects of a person's life that contribute to their sense of self.
- ❖ **Effective Communication:** Communication is crucial in understanding the patient's values, preferences, and goals. Health care professionals should actively listen to patients, involve them in decision-making processes, and provide information in a way that is understandable and supportive.
- ❖ **Shared Decision-Making:** Including patients in decisions about their care empowers them and respects their autonomy. This collaborative approach considers the patient as an active participant in their health care journey.
- ❖ **Cultural Sensitivity:** Recognizing and respecting cultural differences is an important aspect of person-centered care. Understanding a patient's cultural background and beliefs helps to tailor their care to be more meaningful and effective.



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By implementing personhood in patient care, healthcare providers can create a more compassionate and effective healthcare environment that recognizes, and responds to, the unique needs and identities of everyone.

References:

- ❖ Chochinov H. M. (2023). *Fractured Personhood, Suicide, and Lessons from Those Nearing Death*. *Journal of palliative medicine*, 26(8), 1037–1039. <https://doi.org/10.1089/jpm.2023.0299>
- ❖ Chochinov, H. M. (2023). *Intensive caring: Reminding patients they matter*. *Journal of Clinical Oncology*, 41(16), 2884–2887. <https://doi.org/10.1200/jco.23.00042>