Hospice Palliative Care Tip of the Month - March 2025

SBAR & SBORS Communication Tools

Originally created for use in the military, the SBAR (Situation, Background, Assessment & Recommendation) is a tool that provides a standardized way to facilitate important and clear communication between team members. In healthcare, the SBAR is typically used for communication between nurses and physicians.

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Seeing the need for a similar communication tool for non-nursing providers, HPC Consultation Services adapted the SBAR tool to create the SBORS (Situation, Background, Observations, Response and **Suggestions**) tool. Use of the SBORS tool is taught as part of our Advanced Palliative Practice Skills (APPS)¹ course for Personal Support Workers (PSWs) and Health Care Aides (HCAs).



Situation

- √ Your name, title, location
- ✓ Who are you calling about? o Include address or room
- ✓I am reporting that....

number

Background

- ✓ Briefly explain what has been going on recently
- as falls, change in medical
- ✓ Explain what has changed with the care you provide

For Nurses

Communication is the Lifeline of any Relationship

For PSWs/HCAs

Situation

- ✓ Your name, title, location
- √ Who are you calling about?
- o Include address or room number
- ✓I am reporting that....

Background

- ✓ Briefly explain what has been
- ✓ Explain what has changed with the care you provide

Assessment

- ✓I think the problem is...
- ✓ I have done...
- ✓I am concerned because...
- √ Note any changes since last

Recommendations

- ✓ Does the RN/RPN need to come soon?
- ✓ Is there an intervention you would like to try (e.g., to address a behaviour)?
- ✓ How should we document this change ongoing?

Observations

- ✓ Changes in self-report of a

- opportunity for care provision

Response & Suggestions

- ✓ Does the RN/RPN need to come
- Is there an intervention you would like to try (e.g., to address a behaviour)?
- √ How should we document this change ongoing?

Since poor communication, and lack of awareness, can play a role in adverse patient outcomes, the SBAR/SBORS tools are recommended to assist health care providers in organizing their thoughts and recording all pertinent details when communicating with other providers. Nurses and PSWs are often the eyes and ears for other providers, so thorough capturing of patient information is paramount for successful outcomes.

When to Use the SBAR/SBORS

- Handing off a patient between shifts
- Transferring a patient
- Reporting a patient's declining condition, etc.
 Review the patient's MAR and PRNS used

Preparing for SBAR/SBORS Reporting

- Assess the patient using the OPQRSTUV
- Read the most recent physician and nursing notes
- Have the patient chart available

Where to find the SBAR/SBORS Tools

SBAR fillable form - https://hpcconnection.ca/wpcontent/uploads/palliative-care-sbar-communication-tool-fillable.pdf

SBORS fillable form - https://hpcconnection.ca/wpcontent/uploads/sbors fillable.pdf

Reference

1. Hospice Palliative Care (HPC) Consultation Services - Advanced Palliative Practice Skills (APPS): https://hpcconnection.ca/education/courses/ww-hpc-courses/apps/