

TIP OF THE WEEK # 57

SBAR Communication Technique

The Situation-Background-Assessment-Recommendation (SBAR) technique was developed by Kaiser Permanente of Colorado, and has been increasingly adopted by hospitals throughout the US to facilitate proper communication among healthcare professionals. SBAR may be used to report a situation that requires immediate action or to define the elements of a hand off on a patient from one caregiver to another, and is also used in quality improvement reports.

SBAR is an easy-to-remember, concrete mechanism useful for framing any conversation, especially critical ones, requiring a clinician's immediate attention and action. It allows for an easy and focused way between members of the team.

Situation: When calling a healthcare provider to report a change in the patient's condition, the staff describes what is happening at the present time that has warranted this communication.

Background: The staff includes relevant background information specific to the situation such as the patient's diagnosis, his mental status, current vital signs, pain level, etc.

Assessment: The staff offers an analysis of the problem and to convey more extensive data about the patient such as changes from prior assessments.

Recommendation: The staff states what he or she thinks would help resolve the situation. This might be phrased in the form of a question: "Do you think we should give him a medication, perform lab work, do an x-ray, transfer to another unit, etc.?"

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