Praise for

COMMUNICATION RX

“This book provides a blueprint for almost all interactions in healthcare, not just between patients and clinicians, but also among colleagues. Communication Rx is a must-read for anyone who is interested in improving quality and safety—and that should be everyone!”

—DONALD M. BERWICK, MD, MPP, President Emeritus and Senior Fellow, Institute for Healthcare Improvement

“An unrivaled collection of thought leaders together in one foundational resource on patient-centered communication. Improving how we communicate in healthcare is critical to advancing patient safety, quality, and experience. Now, the professional men and women of the ACH, who represent the best and brightest in the industry, have come together to deliver the most up-to-date and comprehensive piece of work yet that advances this critical work. This book is a must-have reference for healthcare leaders, providers, patients, and families.”

—JAMES MERLINO, MD, President and Chief Medical Officer, Strategic Consulting, Press Ganey Associates, Inc.; former Chief Experience Officer, Cleveland Clinic; and author of Service Fanatics

“At a time when technology has created virtual worlds; when it is possible to finance a house, talk across continents, or see unfiltered news images with one mouse click, the encounter between patients and physicians in one another’s presence remains sacrosanct. The authors of Communication Rx have given us one of the best and most comprehensive evidence-based guides to navigating the intricacies of this relationship to date. It is the best prescription I can think of for unlocking the healing potential of the patient-clinician relationship.”

—RICHARD M. FRANKEL, PhD, Professor of Medicine, Indiana University School of Medicine

“No one should be practicing medicine or running a department or a healthcare system without mastering the tools and skills in this compact, beautifully written book on communicating with patients, families, and our colleagues in healthcare.”

—DOUGLAS STONE AND SHEILA HEEN, coauthors of the New York Times bestselling Difficult Conversations
“Change will only come when everyone in the healthcare workforce has developed solid communication skills and the ability to deal effectively with differences. This wonderful book provides practical guidance on how to enhance your communication skills and how to work well with others. Essential reading for our times.”

—ELLIOTT S. FISHER, MD, MPH, John E. Wennberg Distinguished Professor of Health Policy, Medicine, and Community and Family Medicine, Geisel School of Medicine, Dartmouth

“When my work in healthcare started to focus on management and leadership, my late father gave me one book, Language in Thought and Action by S.I. Hayakawa. I think Communication Rx is the sequel that Hayakawa might have written if he had plunged into exploration of the application of his ideas in healthcare. In it, true experts describe the fundamental skill sets for effective communication with patients and among clinicians. It is more than a book about how to talk and how to listen; it is a manual for developing relationships that can adapt to the pressures and unpredictability of medicine.”

—THOMAS H. LEE, MD, Chief Medical Officer, Press Ganey Associates, Inc., and author of The Epidemic of Empathy in Healthcare

“An engaging and evidence-based book on the necessity of communication in healthcare to reduce the epidemic of suffering, this guide to improving healthcare communication is a must-read for caregivers who want to make a difference in the lives of the patients they serve.”

—CHRISTINA DEMPSEY, MSN, MBA, CNOR, CENP, FAAN, SVP, Chief Nursing Officer, Press Ganey Associates, Inc., and author of The Antidote to Suffering

“Whether you’re a clinician interested in improving your communication with patients, a teacher seeking to arm your students with useful tools and techniques, or a healthcare executive intent on improving your system’s patient survey results, this well-written and practical book will be an indispensable companion.”

—ROBERT M. WACHTER, MD, Professor and Chair, Department of Medicine, University of California, San Francisco, and author of the New York Times science bestseller The Digital Doctor

“Communication is easily the most powerful tool in the medical armamentarium, yet attention to this in training programs has been scant. Communication Rx provides direct and practical skills for both clinicians and teachers. It is an invaluable resource for medical professionals across the healthcare spectrum, and a welcome addition to the medical canon.”

—DANIELLE OFRI, MD, PhD, author of What Patients Say, What Doctors Hear
“This remarkable, well-edited text reminds us all of the importance of effective communication and provides the reader with specific recommendations on how to hone those critical skills that facilitate the building of meaningful relationships. This resource not only offers practical guidance on how to listen more effectively and thereby improve the quality of care, it also serves to remind us of the joy that is possible in caring for others.”

—MICHAEL C. BENNICK, MD, MA, AGAF, FACP, Associate Chief of Medicine, Medical Director of the Patient Experience, and Chairman, Patient Experience Council

“Composed of brief readable chapters richly illustrated with vignettes, Communication Rx offers practical guidance across a wide range of topics, ranging from the timeless fundamentals of communication and relationship skills to current state-of-the-art topics such as electronic records and culture and diversity. What’s more, it goes well beyond patient-clinician relationships to look at communication on healthcare teams and organizational culture. This book is the new reference standard for relationship-centered care.”

—ANTHONY SUCHMAN, MD, MA, Founder and Senior Consultant, Relationship Centered Health Care

“At a time when clinician burnout is on the rise and patient frustrations with our debilitated healthcare delivery system continue to escalate, Chou and Cooley provide a timely and comprehensive guide that can turn the tide. By helping clinicians enhance their communication skills, the stronger patient-clinician relationships that ensue will lead to better care and more joy in practice. This material is essential for the toolbox of every clinician, leader, and learner in healthcare.”

—VIVIAN S. LEE, MD, PhD, MBA, former CEO, University of Utah Healthcare, and former Dean, University of Utah School of Medicine

“Drs. Chou and Cooley have assembled a remarkable group of recognized communication experts to address a clear deficit in modern medicine: the underutilization of the power of effective, intimate connection between provider and patient. Through a series of insightful and delightfully true examples, they weave an accurate accounting of how optimal communication can result in both enhanced patient outcomes and increased professional satisfaction, a true win/win. I know of no other book that addresses the incredible potential of patient-centered communication more cogently. As a healthcare executive, I see great value here for patients, physicians, and healthcare leaders alike.”

—HOWARD B. GRAMAN, MD, former Chair, Board of American Medical Group Association, and former CEO, PeaceHealth Medical Group
“Experience equals quality for patients. Good communication allows for greater trust and better relationships between patient and providers. In today’s world of increasing transparency where every experience is shared, it is critical that providers have the skills they need to build and maintain that trusting relationship with their patients. The concepts and skills described in this book establish an excellent foundation for interpersonal communication improving patient outcomes and provider wellbeing.”

—SARA LASKEY, MD, VP and Chief Experience Officer, MetroHealth System, and Executive Board Member, The Beryl Institute

“Excellent resource for all Experience leaders and a must-read for all clinicians. This book is a perfect reminder that we treat human beings, not diseases, and effective communication is the key to all human interactions. It’s a step-by-step guide to deal with all kinds of communication challenges with practical tools, deeply rooted in scientific principles.”

—ALPA SANGHAVI, MD, Chief Quality and Experience Officer, San Mateo Medical Center

“Patients, providers, administrators, and our entire healthcare team benefit when communication is done in the service of our interpersonal and interprofessional relationships. Our clinicians and administrators have found great value in the skills and training outlined in this book. Local expert trainers—both clinicians and nonclinicians—have been critical to the success of our communication program and to the value we are realizing as more and more colleagues adopt these evidence-based skills.”

—ANGELA HOCHHALTER, PhD, VP Patient Centered Care Redesign, Baylor Scott & White Health

“Relationship-centered communication (RCC) is the cornerstone for my interactions with patients and colleagues. In the clinical setting, it’s the framework for all I do, shaping my communication with patients, their visitors, and the interdisciplinary care team. RCC imbues all my teaching with house officers and medical students. It is gratifying to see UCSF trainees embrace these simple, profoundly effective skills. As the physician lead for patient and staff experience at Zuckerberg San Francisco General, we have developed a core team to spread RCC across the organization to providers, staff, and volunteers, convinced that it will enrich all who touch our campus.”

—JEFF CRITCHFIELD, MD, Chief Medical Experience Officer, Medical Director, Risk Management, Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital and Trauma Center, and Professor of Medicine, University of California, San Francisco
“We know from surveys that our patients are concerned that clinical providers may not be meeting their expectations with regard to certain items that are important to them during their clinical encounters. These include understanding and acknowledging the patients’ goals for treatment, appreciating the impact of their suffering on their personal lives and emotions, and imparting empathy. In addition, there is the perception that the explanations of the diagnosis, evaluation, and treatment plans for their disorders could be improved. One of the key factors contributing to these concerns is the absence of formal patient-and relationship-centered communication education during medical school and postgraduate residency training. The ACH has for many years focused its activities on developing evidence-based training curricula to improve this communication process for our clinicians, and their efforts have been successful in enhancing the skills of those who have participated in these training programs. Within our own system, the initial results for our faculty have shown an impressive improvement in patient survey responses. This book further enhances the mission for effective physician-patient communication by providing a rich source of information on this very important subject. An extensive panel of experts share the evidence that forms the basis for the valuable educational initiatives provided by the ACH.”

—DAVID B. SCHWARTZ, MD, FACOG, FRCOG, FCOG (SA),
Director of Clinical Affairs, Special Programs, Office of the Dean,
and Clinical Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Maternal
Fetal Medicine, University of Maryland School of Medicine
COMMUNICATION

Transforming Healthcare Through Relationship-Centered Communication

Edited by
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