Effective patient education is vital for the growth of the chiropractic profession and essential for the growth of your chiropractic practice. The truth is that I cannot think of anything more important than powerful, emotional and honest patient education.

What our society wants and needs is to stay healthy. Interestingly enough, the majority of people are clueless on how to stay healthy or worse, they think they know they are healthy when in fact they are not. It is our job to educate and empower people to be more responsible for their own health and to teach them how to live the Chiropractic Lifestyle to improve the Quality of Life.

What people clearly want is to lose weight, to exercise better, to eat healthier, to quit smoking and to minimize their stress. This is what teaching the Chiropractic Lifestyle is all about and this is exactly why the most important thing you could ever do for your patients is to properly and effectively educate them.

If we do not educate our patients about the benefits of Chiropractic care, the power of an adjustment, the devastating effects of vertebral subluxations and the importance of a wellness lifestyle, then they are left with the alternative. Unfortunately, this is the harsh reality of the alternative:

According to 2005 stats complied by www.cia.gov:

- The United States of America represents 4% of the population but American’s consume 50% of the total amount of medication in the world...at a rate of 25 million doses per hour.
• 400,000 people in the United States die each year as a result of medical negligence.

• 1.6 million people are hospitalized due to adverse reactions to medications and up to 160,000 of them die each year. That breaks down to 3,076 people every week, 439 a day and 18 people each hour.

• Americans rank 84th in the world as a healthy population by The World Health Organization.

Patients are generally shocked to learn that there are side effects to the medications their “trusted” medical doctor has prescribed for them. I have been shocked to discover that over 50% of my adult patients’ chief entrance complaints are the side effects of the drugs their doctor prescribed.

We have discovered a few websites that you can access to do extensive search on your patients’ drug history and share the information with them. You can get information about OTCs (over-the-counter) as well as prescription drugs, contraindications, interactions, warnings, precautions, adverse reactions, dosage and side effects, etc.

Some also include information on vitamins and supplements, as well as general health information. A variety of sites are listed to provide you a wide range of categories so you can search for the information you want easily. When you find the site that provides you with the most valuable information, bookmark it on your computer for easy access.

http://www.pdrhealth.com/
http://www.rxlist.com/
http://medlineplus.gov/
http://health.discovery.com/
http://www.intelihealth.com
http://www.fda.gov/fdahomepage.html
http://www.healthtouch.com/
http://www.webmd.com

Educate and empower your patients to make better health care decisions.

Teach your patients to live the Chiropractic Lifestyle, which of course does not include drugs of any kind. Teach them that better health through better living is the new paradigm.

If I were given the choice of adjusting a person or properly educating them about the bigness of chiropractic, I would always take the opportunity to educate them over the option of adjusting them.

As important as it is to give them an adjustment to free them from nerve system stress and allow their body to heal, it pales in comparison to teaching them the reasons to choose to get adjusted for the rest of their life. Patient education is key. It empowers people to choose the chiropractic lifestyle. It gives people the “why” so that they choose to “comply” with care.

Without effective patient education you will create a “Symptom Relief Practice” as patients usually stop care when they are feeling better. With effective patient education you create a “Wellness Release Practice” as patients continue past relief, into healing and all the way into lifetime wellness care.

This changes everything. In a symptom relief care practice you are always desperate for more and more new patient’s, as they become the lifeblood of the practice. It becomes extremely difficult and stressful to build a growing practice, which in turn keeps you living in lack.

In a wellness release care practice, your retention will be dramatically higher, and therefore the need for more and more new patients is reduced. This is much less stressful and far more profitable. It is significantly easier to build a growing practice, which keeps you living in the land of abundance.

Even more important is this…when your retention or PVA is high you get to consistently experience and witness the miraculous results that chiropractic is famous for. You see dramatic structural changes on post x-rays and witness true healings. This in turn will tremendously increase your confidence, your certainty, your conviction and your clinical competence.

So, are you beginning to understand how important patient education is? It separates the “weak” performer from the “peak” performer in chiropractic. Patient education requires consistent and persistent action.

Patient education can show up in many different ways. It can be in the form of advanced patient workshops, your regularly scheduled re-exams and even what you have in frames on the walls of your office.

It begins with the patient’s initial phone call, and then starts to take form with the consultation and new patient exam. Then it all comes together with a patient educational video and healthcare classes that you provide.

Educating and empowering your staff, your patients and your community are the three most important basic fundamentals of a successful and expanding practice. Patient education works best and most effectively when it is systemized and organized in your office. Helpful suggestions would be to have a series of patient brochures that you systematically give to your patients on specific visits and to create additional educational workshops on topics like posture, exercise, nutrition, stress management, meditation and how to raise a healthy drug free family.

Keep in mind that one of the most important ways to educate and empower your patients is visit by visit. Think in terms of creating “lesson plans” for each and every patient visit. Create a “Chiropractic Patient Cur-
riculum” for a set number of visits. I would recommend at least a 40-visit curriculum. Create a sequence of forty or fifty statements, sound bites, facts, stories or philosophical tidbits that will prompt you to personalize and organize your patient educational lesson plan for each visit.

Put a list in every adjusting room of your forty or fifty lessons plans and on each visit look on the patient’s travel card and connect the visit number with the lesson plan number and educate as you adjust. This should not take any more time than it takes you to adjust right now. You are adding a plan, a purpose to each visit in addition to the adjustment. Think in terms of you adjusting their thinking process as you adjust their nerve system. Have your office be both a healing and a learning institute.

This approach really personalizes your patient education, because you are giving the patient the information in a sequence that makes sense and is far more consistent with what the patient is thinking and experiencing at that specific visit. The bottom line of effective patient education is consistency.

Every three to six months create an entirely new chiropractic patient curriculum so that you stay fresh and original. You can always recycle these as time goes on. Use your imagination, make this fun and even consider using props and visual aids, as we are such visual creatures.

Remember to utilize the “Socratic Method” of asking questions. As you create your chiropractic patient curriculum, think in terms of what would a new patient want or need to know on their 3rd visit, their 8th visit or their 24th visit. Always answer the patient’s unspoken question, “what’s in it for me?”

I can assure you when you take action on this and discipline yourself to get in the habit of making this happen on each and every visit, your practice will take off like never before. Your PVA will soar, your results will be shocking and your confidence will skyrocket. Your patients will love the process, you will stay sharper than ever and abundance will be yours for the asking. Patient education will produce more new patients, dramatically increase your retention, increase your income and make you feel great to be a chiropractor.

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