Is it incumbent upon chiropractors and their staff to always look for better and more effective means of educating their patients? What are the best ways to deliver the chiropractic message? Do people ever really understand the benefits of chiropractic?

You’ve probably asked yourself these questions at one time or another while scratching your head as another patient exclaims that they “feel better,” so they won’t be returning or they “don’t feel better,” which is why they don’t show up for their scheduled appointment. Some patients just exclaim that they are just simply “taking a break.” Amazing. . .right?

Although there are a variety of means of educating patients through pamphlets, brochures, video and audio tapes, there seems to be some frustration on the part of both the doctors and their staff as to the best ways to educate patients and the benefits of long term care.

The best way to educate your patients is to start with a solid consultation, examination and report of findings procedure. These procedures usually begin to create the impressions that patients have about chiropractic, as well as, you and your staff.

Many offices also include some form of health care class or spinal workshop to further enhance the patient’s understanding of what chiropractic care is really all about. A health care class or special consultation seems to create better results when performed every two weeks. . .or more!

Yet even with all the “right” procedures, health care classes, brochures, articles, video and audio, patients still miss their scheduled appointments, leave care prematurely and complain about their pain instead of directing their attention to the cause. The question is WHY?

Although many offices appear to have a solid foundation for the beginnings of patient education, some fall short of their long-term goals. The offices (doctors and staff) have audio and video educational tapes, report of findings folders, brochures and shopping bags of information. . .at the start.

One of the reasons an office may experience patients’ leaving prematurely or what we call, “the leaky bucket,” is because of a lack of “patience.” Patience to educate consistently over the course of a patient’s care.
It is not enough to do a great consultation. It is just not enough to do a great examination or report of findings. Experience has also shown that it is simply not enough to show a patient videotapes or have them listen to an audiocassette or to read any number of brochures.

You and your staff are the primary sources of education for your patient! The patients take their cues from the energy you display, your present time consciousness, your confidence and your attitude towards them.

Every office visit is a chance for you to display the resources that show people who you are, what you do, and why you believe it to be a major benefit for the patient and his/her family.

How often do you and your staff find yourselves saying things like, “that patient was not a good patient,” or “I can’t believe that patient missed another appointment.” Although there are varying levels of value for patients regarding chiropractic care, that should never change what you and your staff is there to do.

You, both doctor and staff, are there to give each patient the very best you have on each visit to your office, regardless of insurance, personality traits, money, or whatever. Each visit is an opportunity to display the purpose, tone, and focus of what chiropractic can do to change their lives. That’s right...you change lives.

“Patient” education is more of an attitude and energy than just information alone. There are chiropractors that have high-tech video screens, computer programs and software, and whole host of gizmos and gadgets. Yet, patients do not necessarily receive a congruent message unless the doctor and staff feel it, display it, speak it and act it.

That “it,” is the patience and the knowing that “who you are” speaks so loudly that the education of patients is automatic. Every conversation, every touch and every action says, “You are in the right place and we can help you.”

One patient at a time, one visit at a time, one focused conversation every time, will give your patients the reason to continue their chiropractic care and they will receive an “education” they will not soon forget!

About The Author
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