

Effective Nursing in the Hospital Setting

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Plans of care are the organizing tools for achieving the goals of care: namely, to identify and address patients needs. To some degree, the success of care plans depends on the cooperation of patients and families. Yet cooperation, which is not always forthcoming, can be undermined by misunderstandings. Attention to communication can help.

One answer to the question of how nurses can effectively elicit patient cooperation is drawn from the three-function approach¹ to the medical interview and the Ask-Tell-Ask method² of interaction – advocated by the American Academy on Physician and Patient ([AAPP](#)). While developed for doctors, both practices are highly adaptable for use by nurses and other professionals who care for hospitalized patients. A brief outline of its modified form³ looks like this:

Function #1 – Gather Data

Objective 1: To collect patients' physical & psychosocial data.

Objective 2: To prepare care plans.

Function #2 – Establish Therapeutic Relationships

Objective: To create an environment that promotes recovery and healing by acknowledging and responding to emotions and by encouraging participation in care decisions.

Function #3 – Educate Patients and Families

Objective 1: To assure that patients and their families understand the nature of their conditions.

Objective 2: To negotiate and implement a care plan.

An example of the Ask-Tell-Ask method of interaction might look as follows. (For Function #3, Objective 1.)

ASK: What patients and their families know; what they feel; what they believe.

TELL: Confirm or correct perceptions as necessary; answer questions; provide other relevant information.

ASK: For reactions to what they've just been told, what it means to them, and why.

¹ Developed by W. Clark, MD, M. Hewson, PhD, and M. Fry, MS

² Visit [AAPP](#) for more on the three-function and Ask-Tell-Ask approaches to Medical Interviews.

³ For information about our professional in-service on this topic, call 1-845-687-2328 or email [Judith Greenfield](#).

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