

Nurse Station Communication Collection

The following collection of patient communication resources is for nurses. The resources are designed to help provide nurses with tools they can have on hand at a nurses' station and easily utilize to have smooth exchanges with patients who have communication vulnerabilities. The resources include communication and alphabet boards in various formats and languages, resources to hand out to patients, and suggestions from other nurses on best practices. The last item will connect you with a collection of annotated articles, primarily by nurses in nursing journals, that chronicle efforts around the globe to improve nurse: patient communication.

- **Bedside communication board from Widgit, UK (28 languages) (free)**
Bronwyn Hemsley, a speech pathologist in Australia, conducted field research to determine the most important phrases that patients wish to convey to caregivers when they do not have the ability to speak. The Central Coast Children's Foundation then adapted these phrases onto a communication board and had them translated into many different languages. Widgit UK then affixed their own symbol sets to the boards and published them on their web site. The boards are thus the result of a global effort to make these phrases accessible and useful to a wide audience within hospital settings. <http://widgit-health.com/downloads/bedside-messages.htm>
- **Toby Churchill Alphabet Board (free)** The Toby Churchill Alphabet Board is a free and effective support for communication. Literate clients can use it to spell out messages as a supplement their current means of communication (e.g., as a backup to a high-tech communication aid), or as part of a broader communication strategy. The PDF that follows contains 4 choices of keyboard – QWERTY, qwerty, ABCD or abcd. Each also contains some useful symbols depicting a variety of feelings, plus a few extra common words (and, the, yes). Individuals just point to the letters to spell words in order to communicate. <http://www.toby-churchill.com/news/free-downloads-and-support-alphabet-communication-boards/>
- **SPEAK Unlimited Paramedic and EMC communication board (free)** This symbol communication board was created as a tool to assist Paramedics and those in the Emergency Medical Services in interacting with any individual for whom clear speech is difficult or impossible. Available in British English and dual-language American / Spanish. <http://widgit-health.com/downloads/paramedic-board.htm>

- **Picture Communication Symbols, Department of Communities (Disability Care Services) and the Department of Community Safety (Queensland Ambulance Service) (free)** This communication board was developed as a tool to enhance communication between paramedics and patients with communication vulnerabilities at the first point of contact in an emergency medical situation in Queensland, Australia, but it has broader uses, for example, in emergency rooms, . It includes a visual pain scale, body outlines to help locate sources of pain, tips for interacting with injured individuals, and other useful features.
<https://www.qld.gov.au/disability/documents/community/medical-signing-board.pdf>
- **Temple University Emergency Communication Board: English/Spanish/Haitian (free)** This communication aid includes key messages (“I can’t speak, but I can hear and understand you”), symbols of important words, a pain scale (“I will point to where I hurt”) , and other valuable features. It includes a number and letter "keyboard." On the back is a personal information form to be filled out by an individual, a family member, a familiar support person, a doctor, or an emergency responder.
<http://disabilities.temple.edu/aacvocabulary/e4all.shtml#index>
- **How to ask “yes” “no “ questions (free)** This one page downloadable sheet can be used to help health care professionals ask yes/no questions more productively.
http://www.patientprovidercommunication.org/userfiles/file/HOWTOASKYES_NoQsdocx.pdf
- **Widgit’s Hospital Procedures. (free)** A series of resources designed to help patients with learning difficulties understand the procedures, sequence of events and people associated with a visit to hospital.
http://www.widgit.com/resources/health/hospital_procedures/index.htm
- **My Health Passport for Hospital/Clinic Visits. Florida Center for Inclusive Communities. (free)** *My Health Passport* is a health advocacy document that describes the unique supports and preferences of an individual. It is designed to be shared with many types of healthcare providers, in clinic and hospital settings, especially for providers who are not very familiar in providing care to individuals with intellectual disabilities. Hard copies of *My Health Passport* are currently available, and can be ordered free of charge by contacting [Dr. Liz Perkins](#) or (813) 974-7076. The forms are also available online.
<http://flfcic.fmhi.usf.edu/resources/materials/health.html>

- **A&E Communication Passport (free)** This Communication Passport uses Widgit symbols and, although designed for use in Accident and Emergency situations, it can come in handy during clinic visits and in other settings. It contains three sections:
 - Things you must know about me (Red)
 - Things important to me (Amber)
 - My likes and dislikes (Green)

<http://www.widgit-health.com/downloads/A-and-E-passport.htm>

- **Patient Journal App (free)** The Josie King Foundation has created a Patient Journal app. Patients and families can use this app to easily record vital medical information, stay organized, keep a permanent medical record, and share the notes with doctors or anybody else via email. Available for free download on the Apple iTunes App Store:

<http://itunes.com/apps/PatientJournal>

[<http://www.josieking.org/page.cfm?pageID=86>]

- **ICE (In case of emergency) Communication Card from Widget. (\$25, Canadian (about \$20 US), for a pack of 20)** The Widgit ICE Communication Card is credit card sized and folds flat and thin to fit in most wallets and purses. It easily folds out accordion-style to a larger sheet. One side contains personal ICE information, on which individuals can write necessary health and personal contact information. On the reverse side is a compact symbol communication sheet containing symbols and phrases for quick essential non-verbal communication. <http://www.bridges-canada.com/symbolizing/software-products/widgit-health/ice.aspx>
- **Widget Patient Communication Sheet (\$20 Canadian (=\$16 US), for a packet of 10)** This sheet is designed with symbols so that patients of all languages and reading abilities can communicate without the spoken word. The sheet features all the major requests and replies along with a pain scale and body diagram to support communication in a hospital setting: <http://store.bridges-canada.com/konakart/ShowSearchResults.do>
- **Green House Publications: Pack of 50 medical communication boards (\$14)** Intended for use in hospitals, rehab units, acute care, emergency rooms, assisted living facilities, nursing homes, clinics, hospice care and in the home, these two sided card peel-off stock boards, available in Spanish or English, include a pain scale for determining where and how badly one hurts, (2) 68-clear, 4-color pictures depicting wants, needs, ailments, comforts, questions, emotions, *etc.*, (3) easy to understand instructions for patient response alternatives, (4) Alphabet for spelling out words, and (5) numbers for numerical information: <http://www.greenhousepub.com/hecacobo.html>

- **AliMed, Critical Communicator Board in 21 languages (\$28 for a packet of 30)** Provides help with understanding medical problems in foreign languages. Helpful for those who have difficulty communicating even basic needs on a temporary basis. Include a pain scale, words and pictures for now (immediate attention, such as hard to breathe), pain (ache, burning, sharp), comfort (head up/down), people (husband, wife, doctor), alphabet, numbers, and days of week. <http://www.alimed.com/the-critical-communicator.html>
 - Also available in a children's version in English and Spanish. <http://www.alimed.com/the-critical-communicator-for-kids.html> (\$32-\$33 for a packet of 25)
- **ICU EZ Board, Vidatak (\$12.95)** Designed to provide an innovative and affordable solution to patient communications for critical care situations. This product, endorsed by the Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association, allows ICU personnel to obtain critical information from non-verbal patients in acute care settings. It's available in many different languages, and there is an English version that is symbol-based. When used with a patient care provider, this tool provides immediate feedback from the patient, allowing for more effective and focused care and reducing the communications issues that can sub-optimize the ICU experience. Providing the ICU EZ Board to patients unable to communicate using verbal means enables the patient to provide valuable feedback about pain, needs, and other vital topics. <http://www.vidatak.com/icuboard.html>
- **Annotated bibliography of articles about nurse:patient communication:** This collection of articles, primarily by nurses in nursing journals, chronicle efforts around the globe to improve nurse: patient communication. The articles collectively make a compelling case for the need to dramatically improve communication between nurses and patients, the availability of effective ways to make such improvements, and the negative consequences of maintaining the status quo. http://www.patientprovidercommunication.org/userfiles/file/1_1HPNursecommunicationannotations.pdf