

*A Conversation With Bill Walsh***TEAMSTEPS****JACOBI MEDICAL CENTER AND NORTH CENTRAL BRONX HOSPITAL**

Hospitals, like airlines and nuclear energy plants, are considered high-reliability organizations (HRO).

An HRO is an organization that risks catastrophic consequences when errors occur. Such organizations must make every effort to establish and protect systems and implement strategies to prevent errors from ever occurring.

One such strategy is TeamSTEPS.



Where did the TeamSTEPS concept originate?

We can thank the US Department of Defense (DoD) for it. Today, the DoD probably trains more of its staff in teamwork than any other organization in the world, but that wasn't always the case. In the mid 1980s, the Army did an analysis of a group of unrelated aviation accidents which resulted in a loss of 147 lives and cost over \$290 million. You know what they found? They found that aviation crew coordination failures had directly contributed to these accidents. Specifically, that crewmembers failed to properly communicate with one another, that workload was uneven and poorly managed, and that errors were made in prioritizing tasks. And by the way, these crews weren't made up of novice airmen – the vast majority of them were highly experienced, well-trained aviators.

Based on the findings, the Army then developed and implemented a system by which they could train and evaluate aviators in improved crew coordination. They had really impressive results. Through this initiative alone, they are able to prevent the loss of about 15 lives and \$30 million annually. I'd say that's pretty powerful testimony to the importance of teamwork.

Well it is, but that's flight crews you're talking about. How did the application move into healthcare?

The DoD then partnered with the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), to find ways of improving teamwork in its own hospitals and clinics. By applying and adapting the crew coordination data and teamwork skills already developed, DoD and AHRQ created TeamSTEPS in 2005.

It's an acronym, right? What does it stand for? And what exactly does it do?

It means Team Strategies and Tools to Enhance Performance and Patient Safety. TeamSTEPS is an evidence-based teamwork system. We call it evidence-based because it is based on 25 years of research on teamwork, team training, and culture change. It is practical, adaptable and designed to improve quality, safety and efficiency in the delivery of care. TeamSTEPS produces high-functioning, effective medical teams that make the best use of information, people and resources, to achieve the best patient outcomes. Team members learn how to both communicate effectively with one another and back each other up, to reduce the chance of human error.

TEAMSTEPPS

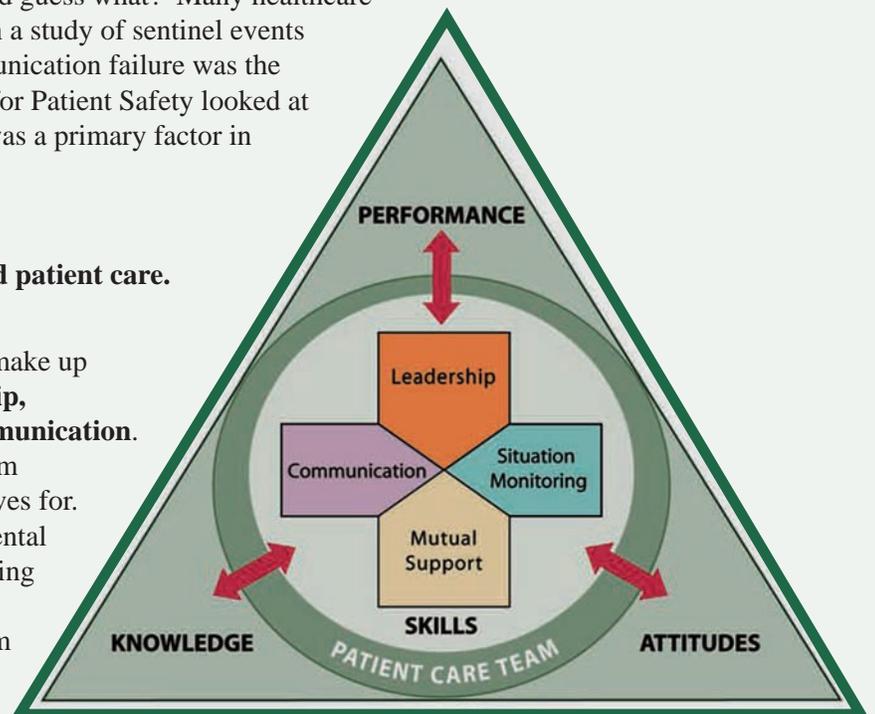
TEAM STRATEGIES & TOOLS TO ENHANCE PERFORMANCE AND PATIENT SAFETY

I don't understand why team members have to "learn to communicate." Don't people know how to talk to one another?

Sure, but this is not about just talking. It's about *communicating*. In healthcare, knowing what information is important and how it should be effectively shared with the rest of the team so that it contributes to a positive patient outcome is good communication. And guess what? Many healthcare providers don't know how to communicate well. In a study of sentinel events 1995-2005, The Joint Commission found that communication failure was the leading root cause. In another study, the VA Center for Patient Safety looked at 6,000 RCAs and found that communication failure was a primary factor in nearly 80% of them.

Ok, I see that communication is important to good patient care. So TeamSTEPPS teaches better communication?

Yes and actually, there are four teachable skills that make up the TeamSTEPPS model. They are called **Leadership, Situation Monitoring, Mutual Support, and Communication**. These four skills interplay dynamically with key Team Competency Outcomes, or goals which the team strives for. These outcomes are **Knowledge** (having a shared mental model among all team members) **Attitudes** (developing mutual trust and a team orientation among team members) and **Performance** (a high-performing team delivers results that are accurate, adaptable, productive, efficient, and safe).



Well, it sounds like a good plan, but how does it all get translated into practice?

Through training. Basic training involves a full day of lectures, discussion, and practice examples in each of the four skills. More intense training is necessary for staff to become certified as Master Trainers. TeamSTEPPS has been adopted corporate-wide, so there's training going on at every HHC facility.

At our hospitals, Women's Health was the first service to embrace TeamSTEPPS. That service offered a preliminary training conference in early 2010, where more than 100 WHS staff learned how to use TeamSTEPPS. Behavioral Health Service was next to begin training. Eventually, all services demanded training, and there is now an established educational program which offers training sessions to all staff, nearly every month.

In the OR, Dr. Len Golden is one of three Anesthesiology Master Trainers, and is champion of an initiative which will have all OR staff -- surgeons, anesthesiologists, and perioperative nursing -- trained in TeamSTEPPS within the next year. In Surgery, Dr. Greenstein is also a Master Trainer, several more surgeons are pursuing this certification as well. A goal is to incorporate TeamSTEPPS training into mandatory credentialing for all clinical staff. In perioperative nursing, TeamSTEPPS is now included as a standard education presentation. It is easy to see how important TeamSTEPPS can be in helping us to provide better and safer patient care in the OR.

It doesn't take rocket science to know that you can get a better result – at anything – when you work as a team. Bringing together the talent, energy, eyes and ears of a whole group of people who are supported by the right information and are focusing on a shared goal will always contribute to better outcomes.

Especially when it comes to patient care.

So have a lot of people been trained?

To date, 800 staff members from many services and support areas have participated in training, including Medicine, Surgery, Anesthesiology, Pediatrics, Women's Health, Behavioral Health, Community Health Centers, Nursing, Food & Nutrition, Admitting, Environmental Services and Clinical Engineering. Fifty-six staff members are Master Trainers.

Are we seeing a lot of buy-in at our hospitals?

Everyone who has taken TeamSTEPPS training is very enthusiastic. However, the challenge – as is with any tool of cultural change - is to hard-wire TeamSTEPPS into daily practice. That takes a certain mindfulness, but there's no question of the benefit.

Strategies for doing this are underway. For example, WHS stresses daily huddles (a TeamSTEPPS communication tool) in both inpatient and outpatient areas. It is also working on a TeamSTEPPS FMECA to be presented shortly; the goal of which was to examine certain communication failures and find ways to prevent them.



NCBH LABOR & DELIVERY TEAMSTEPPS HUDDLE

“TeamSTEPPS encourages every team member to speak up, and teaches them effective strategies for doing so. As a result, communication is improved, which in turn helps us to provide better, safer care.”

Vera Appiah Agyemang, RN, MSN, Associate Director of Nursing, WHS

In the Behavioral Health Service (BHS), 110 staff members have already been trained; 15 of them are Master Trainers. This service finds TeamSTEPPS tools particularly helpful when used during crisis management. Staff members report that applying these tools during such incidents makes the experience a safer one for both patient and staff. Also in TeamSTEPPS, team members are encouraged to be assertive in sharing their thoughts, opinions and objections. BHS staff at all levels have said this makes them feel that their contributions are valuable and important to good patient care.

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BEHAVIORAL HEALTH TEAMSTEPPS HUDDLE

“By clarifying team member roles and responsibilities, facilitating conflict resolution, and improving information sharing, TeamSTEPPS helps to eliminate many barriers to quality and safety.”

- Geretha Diamond, RN, MSN, Associate Director of Nursing, BHS



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A Conversation With Bill Walsh is produced by the Department of Public Relations, NBHN