INTRODUCTION

The evidence is clear: empathy is healing and judgment is harmful, especially for vulnerable populations. We all have judgments, and with intentional practice, we can learn practical tools to mitigate judgment and convey more empathy, which improves both patient outcomes and our own work satisfaction.

“The Empathy Effect: Countering Bias to Improve Health Outcomes,” a new half-day communication skills workshop for all healthcare team members, shares these skills, along with the evidence base supporting IHC’s empathy conveyance model. Learners reflect on cues that trigger judgment, and practice an easy-to-implement technique for reframing those cues. IHC’s empathy conveyance model enhances skills for strengthening relationships with patients, families and other members of the healthcare team.

STRENGTH EVIDENCE

Empathy is healing and judgment is harmful

IMPACT of JUDGMENT & EMPATHY

1. Health outcomes
2. Patient/client experience
3. Healthcare team experience

Vulnerable populations experience greater harm from judgment and lack of empathy

IDENTIFY internal and external cues [internal: feeling anxious; external: appearance]

NOTICE judgments, and use counter-cues to shift gears [from feeling anxiety to imagining what the person is feeling; from judging appearance to envisioning the other person as a family member]

GOODWILL greeting [from “Name?” to smiling, “Welcome___, nice to see you today”]

EMPATHIC language [from “train wreck” to “person with complex needs”]

AFFIRM strengths [from “That’s great” to “I’m impressed with your follow-through”]

REFLECTIVE listening [from “Um-hm” to “I heard you say... did I get that right?”]

THE EMPATHY EFFECT WORKSHOP BUILDS SKILLS FOR:

- Enhancing healthcare professionals’ ability to build trusting relationships
- Nurturing a workplace culture that is welcoming, respectful and trauma-informed
- Helping employees reconnect with meaning in their work
- Fostering equity in healthcare through consistent patient-centeredness

EARLY RESULTS

Inaugural training sites are tracking outcomes for patients and employees. Outcomes data collection will be completed September, 2019.

CG-CAHPS survey question (Would you recommend this provider’s office to your family and friends?) increase from 74% (4Q2017) to 76% (2Q2018)

Empathy Effect workshop learner evaluations: Overall average 3.83 (range 3.65-3.99, on a scale of 0-4.0)

“Amazing training that all healthcare staff can benefit from.” – Empathy Effect learner, April 2018

Seven California safety-net organizations have launched The Empathy Effect communication skills training to improve their care to vulnerable populations and enhance employee satisfaction.