

Effective Healthcare Communication: A Story in Three Parts

Nagesh Rao, Ph.D.
Director, MICA

XVIII NATIONAL SEMINAR ON HOSPITAL & HEALTHCARE
MANAGEMENT,
MEDICO LEGAL SYSTEMS AND CLINICAL RESEARCH
May 6, 2016





A Story, Part 1:

Communication is common sense, so why even bother?

Impact of Communication in a Hospital

- Patients
 - Greater patient satisfaction
 - Higher levels of compliance
 - Improves Patient safety
 - Lower levels of litigation
- Employees
 - Great job satisfaction
 - Lower levels of stress and burnout
 - Higher levels of productivity



Economic impact of Communication Inefficiencies in Hospitals (Agarwal et al., 2010)

| | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Wasted Physician Time | \$800 million |
| Wasted Nurses Time | \$4.9 billion |
| Wasted Time During Discharge | \$6.9 billion |
| TOTAL ANNUAL WASTE | \$12.6 billion annually |



A Story, Part 2:

Why care?

Who was your first healthcare provider?





Healthcare versus Medical Care

- Healthcare aims to address the comprehensive and holistic health needs of a patient – physical, psychological, relational, religious/spiritual, and lifestyle dimensions.
- Medical care aims to cure a specific illness or disease.





1. Communication is a rhythm.
2. Communication is strategy first and skill next
3. Fix home first



A Story, Part 3:

Let's start a new rhythm!

Nasreddin
Hodja



The Positive Deviance Approach



by

Nagesh Rao, Ph.D.

President and Director

Mudra Institute of Communications, Ahmedabad (MICA)

nagesh@micaemail.in

The Positive Deviance Approach

The Mindset Flip



Nagesh Rao, Ph.D.

President and Director

Mudra Institute of Communications, Ahmedabad (MICA)

nagesh@micamail.in

A Case Study of Billings Clinic, Montana

- What if a jumbo-jet crashed and killed 275 people each day because the pilots were too busy to complete all pre-flight checks and, four times out of ten, in a hurry to take-off?
- On average, hospital acquired infections (HAIs) kill about 275 patients in U.S. hospitals a day, largely because hand hygiene, gowning, and gloving protocols are not stringently followed. HAIs are 100% preventable.

Methicillin Resistant *Staphylococcus Aureus* (MRSA)

- MRSA can live up to six weeks on environmental surfaces and transmits easily through contact.
- MRSA infections have increased 32-fold in the U.S. in the past three decades.

What happened at Billings Clinic?

- 2004 - Billings Clinic CEO Nick Wolter attends PD workshop conducted by Jerry and Monique Sternin.
- Wolter and Nancy Iversen, Director of Patient Safety champion PD in Billings Clinic

Key steps

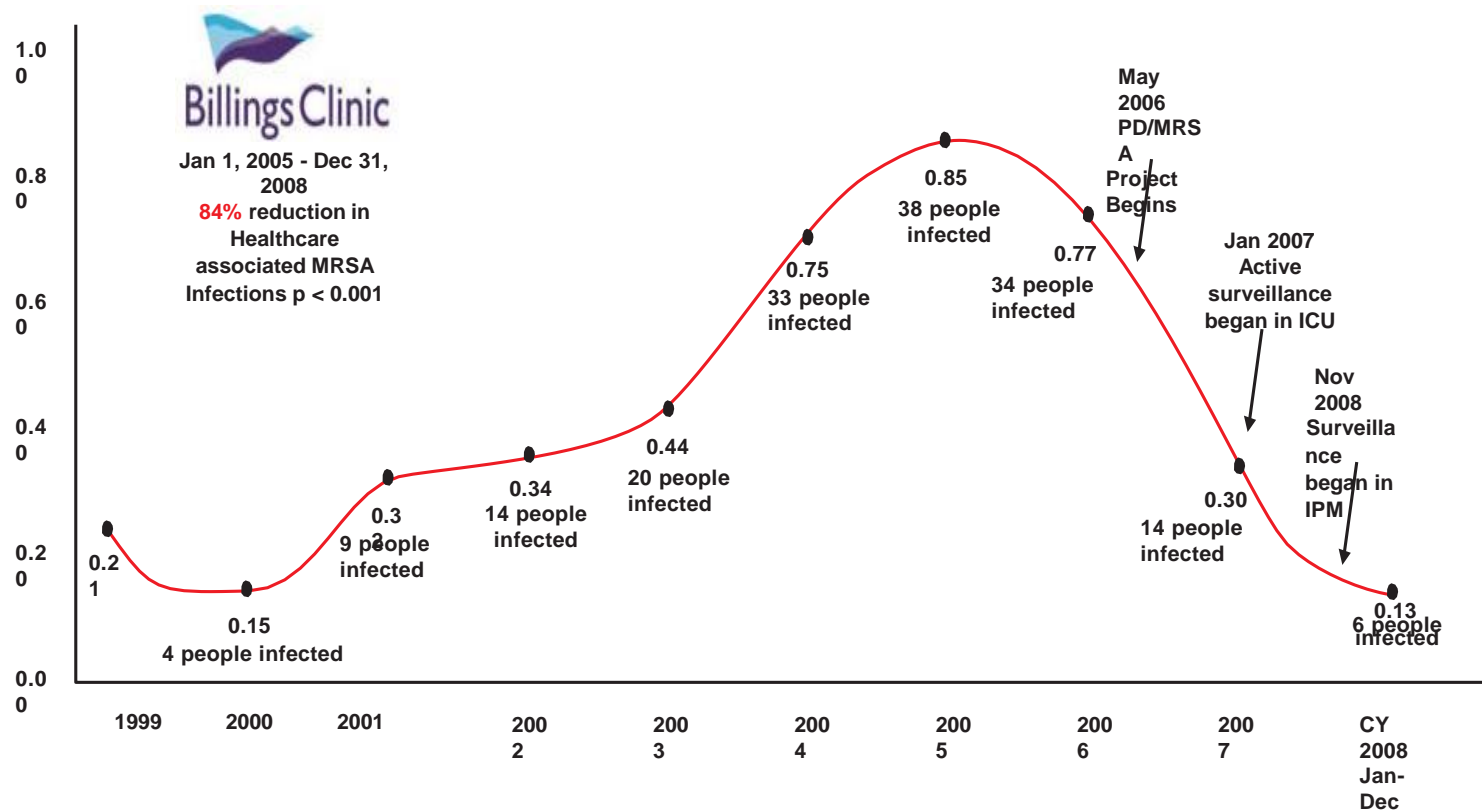
- High levels of resistance, especially from surgeons
- Improv theater to create fun and dialogue
- 50 improv sessions for 500 staff in 2007, from all over the hospital
- Staff creates simple solutions

Act your way to change

- A physician stops wearing his tie, his white coat, and long sleeves, all vectors for the spread of MRSA infections. Many others adopt his practice.
- An ICU nurse disinfects a patient's side rails several times during her shift to keep MRSA from being picked up and spread.



Please wash your hands before checking my
dad



Declining MRSA infections at Billings Clinic

A red triangle graphic in the top-left corner, with a white triangle cutout at its bottom-left vertex.

PD is about

Small (invisible) acts
that make a **big** difference
that yield **better** outcomes

Positive Deviants

Ordinary people who have found better (or even extraordinary) solutions to existing problems – against all odds – without access to any extra resources.



Paradigm changers ...

- What do we wish to provide - medical care or healthcare?
- Invest in communication strategically, starting within the hospital first and then focus on patients
- Flip the mindset – a positive deviance approach.



“The shortest distance between any two people is a story.”

Patti Digh

