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Tailoring Your Counseling Approach to Your Patient's Personality

Presenter: Kathleen Liston, MA

Hello everyone, I'm Kathleen Liston. I'm Field Training Manager for the Eastern US and today I am very excited to discuss with you how your patients personalities help us interact with them. So it's really important to be aware of how your patients prefer to be interacted with during the preparation for their visit to your office, how they would like to be approached during their visit to your office, and how they prefer to have information presented to them.

After today's course, participants will be able to list the four personality types and characteristics of each one, describe the ways to modify communication approach for each patient personality type, and list the ways to build trust with each of the personality types.

These are the risk and limitations of the course. If you need to print this off, please feel free to do so. Otherwise we are going to jump into our discussion on patient personality types.

So true or false, the best hearing care providers are able to read their patients.

Have you ever had a patient schedule an appointment to get their hearing checked? You went through all the motions and it was determined that the patient had a hearing loss, but in the end they decided to do nothing about it. Sure, it's happened to all of us at one point or another. And not only is it frustrating because it generally takes a long time for a patient to work up the courage to come into your office. Studies say on average about seven years, other studies say about 10 years.

But at this point they already have had a problem hearing that is noticeably affecting them and they still aren't willing to do anything about it. So why do you think this happens? From a business perspective, it's not easy to attract new patients who need our help to our offices. We need to be able to better understand what our patient's motivation is and how we can best interact with them. This is best determined by personality type.

It also helps us form relationships and demonstrate value to our patients in the most effective way possible. I have noticed over my several years in the field of audiology, many of our best hearing care providers are really good at reading people and able to quickly identify their patient's personality type and adapt the way they engage with them if needed. So really, there's no one way or correct way to engage with everyone. In fact, we probably need to change our approach depending on the personality type. So the answer to this question question is of course true.

Often the decision between a customer choosing you over someone like you is your ability to know exactly what to say, when to say it, and how to make it count. That's a quote by Phil Jones and although many of you are familiar with Phil Jones. For those of you who are not, he is a well known author and speaker on the psychology of words, how to effectively use them, and he's known for his power of knowing exactly what to say. We need to be able to pick up on those sometimes subtle and sometimes very obvious cues that our patient is providing with us. And that will help us quickly determine what personality type our patient has.

I once had a potential patient come in towards the end of the day. He had no appointment and he was by himself. And it was our policy if someone came in without a third party to only do part of the test and then have the patient come back in with the third party in order to finish the evaluation. This person, however, was insistent that he could not hear his wife, that he needed to hear his wife, and she was very soft spoken. So I saw the opportunity for what it was.

This guy needed help and if I didn't help him, the next person obviously would.

So what exactly is a patient personality? A patient personality is a unique set of characteristics or behaviors or preferences that a person has. And you might be asking yourself, why do we care? Well, we can actually predict what they need, what they want, what they already know, what they expect, and how to reach out to them more effectively. Knowing our patient's personality type gives us a unique

advantage.

It gives us a shortcut, if you will, to how this particular patient is going to react to what we say and how we communicate with them in their preferred way.

So here are the personality types. There are four of them. So we have the driver, which is also referred to as assertive. We have analytical. We have expressive or influencer, an amiable, steady.

So let's go ahead and break down these four personality types and we're going to show how it enables us to understand the needs of each patient so that we can help them meet their goals.

The first one is driver. So when I look at this, I see a guy who is extremely intense. You can, you can feel it just looking at this picture. And that's exactly what the driver is. Drivers are direct.

They are focused on getting the job done. And they're looking for credibility in you, their hearing care provider. They want to see you as the person of authority. In other words, how are you going to solve their problem?

They often can seem rude or short. Often they will give one word answers to your questions. Going back to my potential patient who came in because he wanted to hear his soft spoken wife. He was a driver. How did I know this?

Well, he came into the office Determined to, quote, unquote, get the job done so that he could hear his wife. And I suspect she was probably very ill. But I didn't engage this person like I may have if he was a different personality type. This guy was very direct with me and to the point in terms of what he wanted. And he did in fact appear a little rude, especially to the patient care coordinator.

When you identify a driver, know that these people are quick to purchase. If you have given them a solution and they feel like you are an expert on whatever the product may be that you're recommending, they're already on board to get help with their problem. So that is our driver.

Our next personality type is the analytical. And analytical is wanting a clear breakdown of how you're going to help them. These people want facts, they want statistics. They want to know the return on investment. In other words, these people are very detail oriented.

Do you know people like this? We all do.

They want to know what you offer. These people are very focused. Very often these people are engineers, accountants or finance people. Avoid high pressure tactics with these people. You want to give them the time and the space to analyze the data and process the information that you provide.

Our next personality is the expressive. This guy looks like he's having a lot of fun, which he is. He always does.

Expressive people are emotion driven. They can be impulsive. But these people, they care about the experience that they're going to receive in your office. They are enthusiastic, they're outgoing and they're persuasive. They're also highly creative and they're very social beings.

These people always have great stories and engaging conversations. They radiate a very high energy. So think of your favorite uncle, you know, the one that has people sitting on the edge of their seat with his latest antics and stories at all your family get togethers. That is going to be you're expressive.

Lastly, we have amiable. And these people are all about trust. Look at this lady, she looks as sweet as they come. She is driven by personal connections and she values collaboration. This individual may

need to have their handheld until the purchase.

These people do not make quick decisions. These people are cooperative and empathetic. These people are relationship focused. These people often are people pleasers.

And people tend to be very calm in this personality. So think of your favorite grandma, the one who bakes cookies, the one everyone loves and has a special bond with. That is going to be this personality type.

So now that we talked about the personality types, let's switch gears a little bit and talk about what makes a successful hearing aid provider. So in addition to being able to recognize these personality types, a very good hearing aid provider is going to follow these best practices. The first one is they're always actively listening to whatever their patient is saying. When I worked as a field audiologist, I could always tell the really good and successful providers because they were the ones who sat very collected and let their patients talk for as long as they wanted to without being interrupted. This trait is so important for all people.

The next best practice is always showing value to your patient. So how do we show value? Well, we demo the product. We show value by solving problems and we solve problems by showing benefits.

The third way is always staying connected, building and creating long term customer relationship with trust and rapport. This is crucial for your patient's overall business success.

And lastly, follow up. Stay in touch with your patients or as my colleague Chris says, date your patients.

Why would we date our patients? Because if you don't date your patient, I guarantee you someone else will. And a lot of people are trying to date your patient. There's probably a lot of invitations in their

mailbox. But keeping in touch with your patient will actually strengthen the relationship.

Obviously it's going to increase communication. And just as you worked really hard to get this patient to come in to see you in the first place, it's equally as important to work hard to keep this person.

So how do we tailor our approach to for each individual personality? Because each personality has its own distinct characteristics for how they want to be approached and how you should establish rapport with them. So let's talk about our driver. Drivers are usually pretty easy to pick out. Why?

Because they are dominant. They get straight to the point. Remember my walk in patient who wanted to hear his wife? They are decisive, they are goal oriented and they value concrete information.

How do we tailor it to them? Well, it's better to be over prepared. We want to highlight the benefits, but we want to avoid giving too much detail. We want to be seen as the person of authority. And a lot of times drivers have egos.

Appeal to it.

If you don't know the answer to a question, tell them. I will have to check on that and get back to you.

What are some things to be aware of? Well, these people may struggle to connect emotionally and they don't always value other people's opinions.

So how do you establish rapport with a driver? Well, it can be challenging, but be direct. If they talk fast, you talk fast. Be respectful of their time. It may take a little while to establish rapport.

They may need a little more time just to trust you.

All right, how do we tailor to the analytical? Well, as we mentioned before, analytical people are very detail oriented. They are methodical, they are data driven, and they prefer a very thorough explanation and logical reasoning. These people can be indecisive because perhaps they overanalyze everything and it could cause them to miss out on a good opportunity.

How should we approach the analytical? We don't overhype and we really should never over hype anything, but especially with an analytical, and you don't want to rush an analytical. It's probably safe to assume that these people have done their research and don't try to force a relationship with this group.

How do you establish rapport with them?

Well, they want to know that you're reliable and that you have a solid plan of action for them. So be transparent with them and above all, be sure to answer all their questions.

Amiable. These people won't do a lot of research prior to their visit. And unlike the drivers, they don't make decisions easily. Focus on the reason that brought them into your office, which features are most important to them. Help them to visualize the outcome and bring up examples of successful patients.

This personality type may need to have their hand held to get through the initial stages of purchasing and how to learn to use a hearing aid. How do we establish rapport? You want to make sure to follow up with them after you dispense the hearing aids and continue to build the relationship.

So now, last but not least, is the expressive. The expressive people are creative, outgoing and social. Often they're influencers with high energy and they value mutual respect, loyalty and friendship. So how do we tailor our approach for them? Focus on the experience.

Tell them how your product has impacted other people's lives and how it can help meet their needs.

They don't particularly like the details, so don't focus on facts, but make sure that you get their buy in by saying something like, so we can agree that XYZ and then go on.

How do we build trust? Well, with an expressive, it's all about the emotional connections.

So we have these four different personality types. How do we differentiate?

Well, it may not be as easy as you think. Most people are a mix of either some or all of these four personalities. So you really need to tailor your approach to the most dominant personality. Some people will refer to these personality types as animals. So for example, a driver is a shark and analytical is an owl.

Expressive is a monkey and amiable is a koala bear. So here's a tip. Try to associate each personality with someone you know. And that way when you're trying to analyze someone, you have that person in mind.

So now we're going to do a little poll. I'm going to ask you what personality you think this is. This personality type, always ask, did that answer your question?

So is it the driver? Analytical, expressive or amiable? So go ahead and fill out. Choose which personality you think that best meets.

Give you a little time.

Okay, we've got about 90% saying analytical. 90% says analytical. Well, guess what, 90%, you are correct. Analytical is famous for asking a lot of questions. We always want to make sure that we

address all of their concerns and questions.

Questions completely. So great job.

Next, which personality is this? Avoid being too pushy or aggressive. So again, there's going to be a poll that pops up. Is the driver analytical, expressive, amiable? Which one?

All right. And we've got about 91 responding. Amiable. You guys are good. You are correct.

It is amiable. Remember, these people are turned off when people are too pushy or aggressive. Really need to use a gentle approach with these people and just show them how your product can benefit from them. All right, next one. Which personality?

This one enjoys storytelling and engaging conversations.

So which personality would you choose?

All right. And with the. We've got 100% at expressive. You guys are just killing it today.

So expressive is it. These people feel excited and exp. Inspired by your products. They like to have fun. Avoid being too technical with this group.

Group.

And the last question. Which characteristic is not associated with a driver personality? A, they don't make quick decisions. B, they don't want their time wasted. C, they're looking for credibility.

And D, they may appear confrontational. So go ahead and mark which characteristic is not associated with a driver personality?

All right, we've got about 80% that say they don't make quick decisions. I'll go ahead and share these results.

Okay, so 80% say they don't make quick decisions. And that is our correct answer.

But you know, they are looking for credibility.

That is true. So the question was asking you which characteristic is not associated with a driver? A driver does not want their time wasted. A driver is looking for credibility. And a driver may appear confrontational, so they do make quick decisions.

So good job. Very good job.

So in summary, after this class, you will be able to list the four personality types and characteristics of each one.

You will be able to describe the ways to modify your communication approach for each patient or personality type. And three, list the ways to build trust with each of the personality types.

I will stay on here if you have any questions. Otherwise, I thank you for joining me today. I hope the awareness of patient personality is something that you incorporate into your practice if you're not already doing so.

All right. I'm not seeing any questions in the Q and A at this time, so why don't we go ahead and end the session for today? All right. Thank you so much for joining us. Oh, wait, I do see.

Oh, okay. Oh, just someone saying thank you so much. Kathleen and I will go ahead and end the session. All right. Thank you.