The power of gratitude

How appreciative expression uplifts work relationships and wellness

The old adage “count your blessings” is much more than a sweet sentiment. The value of appreciative expression can create positive workplace relationships, elevated wellness, and increased job satisfaction. From a psychological standpoint, expression of gratitude for a job well done has a positive impact on both the person receiving the gratitude and the person expressing it.

Every day I perform a simple, silent exercise. I ask myself if I have really thanked the person who gave me what is possible for me to experience; or if I have really thanked the person who created the circumstances that made me aware of the gift; or if I have really thanked the person who made the gift possible; or if I have really thanked the person who received the gift for me and took care of it; or if I have really thanked the person who gave me the gift for free and took care of it; or if I have really thanked the person who gave me the gift for free and took care of it.

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guidance to physicians about responding diplomatically and appropriately to

Many doctors and nurses may feel uncomfortable. However, if a patient requests advice, the medical team is expected to be responsive. This can increase patient satisfaction and reduce complaints.

Most patients convey gratitude to their physicians and nurses through small gestures, such as cards or letters. These messages can be a source of reassurance for the medical team, knowing that their care has been appreciated.

For some patients, the act of giving may be an integral part of their overall health and well-being. This is particularly true for those who have experienced significant health challenges or have been treated by a particular physician or nurse.

In this context, responding to gratitude is not only ethical but also vital to maintaining a positive relationship with the patient. It can also help reinforce the importance of the patient-physician relationship and encourage a culture of gratitude within the healthcare setting.

We believe a healthy shift in focus is towards ensuring excellent, equitable, and accessible care. As the University of Maryland School of Nursing states, "Heartwarming stories of nurses and physicians who go above and beyond for their patients inspire us from the nursing staff to the hospital administrator. A culture of kindness and empathy can significantly improve patient outcomes and overall satisfaction with healthcare."
A CONVERSATION WITH CHONG PORTER

Most patients convey gratitude to their physicians and nurses with a heartfelt expression of thanks. And many consumers want to express themselves in a more tangible way, by making a financial gift to their physician’s clinical program or hospital. In the age of social media, it is harder than ever for healthcare providers to acknowledge gratitude that patients express, and then to communicate the value of such recognition. Chong Porter, associate vice chancellor for development and advancement at UC Davis Health, offers insights to providers about how to respond to gratitude appropriately and effectively.

Q. Do any patients make it clear that they want to offer a financial gift?

A. Grateful patients who offer to donate funds.

Q. What should doctors or nurses say if a patient asks how they can help?

A. Gratitude for compassionate, excellent care remains the most powerful means always separate from delivery of care. Chong Porter, associate vice chancellor for development and advancement at UC Davis Health, offers insights to providers about how to respond to gratitude appropriately and effectively.

Q. What typically prompts a patient to consider making an initial gift?

A. Although physicians and nurses aren’t professional fundraisers, they play an important role in granting patients and institutions they admire.

Q. What guidelines has UC Davis adopted about gifts from patients?

A. UC Davis Health leadership and philanthropy development have set in place safeguards for accepting gifts from grateful patients.

Q. How can physicians and nurses better prepare to respond to philanthropic opportunities?

A. We’re inviting faculty members and nurses to the “Philanthropy Workshops” we are presenting in partnership with DaVita, a leading dialysis company.

The Integrative Medicine website website was created to provide a comprehensive overview of alternative and integrative medicine practices and therapies. The website offers information on a wide range of topics, including brain health, sleep, chronic pain, and mental health. The website also provides resources for patients and healthcare providers, such as articles, videos, and educational programs.

The UC Davis Center for a Diverse Healthcare Workforce (CDHW) is a small program that engages successive cohorts of "philanthropy partners," including physicians, nurses, and leadership, to be our allies in helping to create lasting change to enhance the culture of philanthropy at UC Davis Health.

The CDHW website is available at https://health.ucdavis.edu/workforce-diversity/ to learn more about how to engage in this important work.

FROM PAGE 2

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**OCCURRENCE HIGHLIGHTS (IVORY 2)**

<table>
<thead>
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**EVENT SPONSORS**

- CDHW: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Program
- Marketing
- Office of Equity, Diversity & Inclusion
- Health-at-Work Institute
A CONVERSATION WITH CHONG PORTER

Most people convey gratitude to their physicians and nurses when they have a healthy outcome, but what do they do when the health care consumers and patients wish to express themselves in a more tangible way, by making a financial gift to their physician’s clinical program or institution? “The idea of giving is no longer an esoteric concept but is now a very real and meaningful gift to patients who wish to thank their physician,” said Rosane Oliveira, an assistant professor of medicine in the Department of Family Medicine at UC Davis Health. “Often, people feel that gifts are not appropriate, and therefore, they do not express gratitude even when they wish to do so.”

A PROFESSIONALISM PERSPECTIVE

“Oftentimes, we believe that a financial gift is not appropriate,” Oliveira observed. “However, it is important to realize that giving is handled properly—which means it is always kept confidential and secure. Compliance with donor acknowledgement is a must. Physicians need to be trained in how to accept and handle philanthropic offerings as well as to know there is no financial incentive to decline a patient’s gift.”

Case Studies in Philanthropic Engagement

A recent case study demonstrated that 36% of our donors are grateful patients. One of our most generous donors gave us a heartfelt statement of thanks. Some health care organizations have a patient-gratitude program, which includes a thank-you card and a small gift, such as a gift card or a heartfelt statement of thanks. Dr. Oliveira advocates the “lifestyle medicine” concept, built upon four pillars: nutrition, physical activity, emotional connectivity, and spiritual connection. Consider that our donors are grateful patients. One of our most generous donors gave us a heartfelt statement of thanks. Some health care organizations have a patient-gratitude program, which includes a thank-you card and a small gift, such as a gift card or a heartfelt statement of thanks.

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New Faculty WELCOME

Rita Clema, MBBS, FAAFP, is a health sciences clinical expert professor of family medicine, specialty in infectious diseases, along with infectious prevention and international relationships for hospital patients and subpopulations. She treats children with acute and chronic infectious diseases, including patients with immunity impairment.

Surgical pathologist Mingyu Chen, M.D., Ph.D., an assistant professor of pathology and laboratory medicine, specializes in renal pathology, make goutary (gout) diagnosis, and has expertise in brown fat, inflammation and cancer patients in plant cell dysfunction in diagnosis and pathogenesis of prion disease.

The training director of the internal medicine and psychology residency program, Jeremy Dancer, M.D., is an assistant clinical professor of psychiatry and neuroscience. He integrates care for the medical and psychiatric diseases, particularly for individuals with neurodevelopmental disorders.

Brittaney Dubbin, Ph.D., an assistant professor of pathology and laboratory medicine, specializes in epigenetic disease and digital pathology. He leads multi-disciplinary teams to figure out strategies for focusing on frequencies, and spearheads projects creating image libraries for machine learning algorithms.

Ali Ghi, M.D., an associate clinical professor in the Division of Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolism, is part of the Endocrinology Fellowship Training Program team. She is co-instructor of the Record of the School of Medicine's BMIRN course and the new Endocrinology outpatient specialist in general endocrinology.

Kumar R. Elgin, Ph.D., a professor of biostatistics in the Department of Public Health Sciences, specializes in the parent offspring medicine and cognitive health study and research activities of the Chicago Health and Aging Project, and co-leads the Data Core for the UC Davis Alzheimer's Disease Center.

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How appreciative expression uplifts work relationships and wellness

The old adage “count your blessings” is much more than a sweet and joyous way of thinking. It can also help you reduce stress, enhance your sense of well-being, and even improve your overall relationships.

In a recent study, researchers at the University of California, Davis, found evidence that expressing gratitude can have a positive effect on both the giver and the recipient.

“Gratitude elevates, energizes, inspires, it transforms. People are moved, inspired, and even help prolong life,” said Robert Emmons, a UC Davis professor of psychology, who has distinguished himself as the world’s foremost expert on the psychological and physical effects of expressing gratitude. He regards gratitude as foundational to humanity’s survival and well-being. “When people are grateful, they are more open, kinder, and open to new perspectives and possibilities,” he added. “Gratitude can help us see the good in our lives and actively engage in acts of kindness.”

In their study, Emmons and his colleagues surveyed more than 300 participants who kept gratitude journals for a week. The results showed that those who expressed gratitude reported higher levels of happiness, decreased stress, and improved relationships with others.

“Gratitude is a powerful motivator that reinforces positive thoughts and actions,” Emmons said. “From a psychological standpoint, expressing gratitude for a job well done is a powerful tool that can help you maintain a positive outlook and better work-life balance.”

Emmons and his team also conducted a study on the effects of gratitude on public health. They found that individuals who expressed gratitude were less likely to develop chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes.

“Gratitude can be a simple, yet effective way to improve your overall health and well-being,” Emmons said. “Even a brief exercise such as writing down three things you are grateful for each day can have a significant impact on your physical and mental health.”

Emmons and his colleagues have also found that gratitude can be a powerful tool for reducing stress and improving job satisfaction. In a recent study, they found that individuals who expressed gratitude experienced less stress and were more likely to report feeling positive at work.

“Gratitude is a simple, yet powerful tool for improving your overall health and well-being,” Emmons said. “We encourage everyone to try expressing gratitude on a daily basis, even if it’s just a simple thank you to a colleague or a friend.”

Emmons and his team have also developed a gratitude program that is being offered at UC Davis and other universities across the country. The program consists of weekly sessions that focus on the benefits of expressing gratitude and how to incorporate it into your daily life.

For more information on the program, visit the UC Davis Health website at health.ucdavis.edu/about/insight.

Contact:
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