

Pain - Communication and the Patient Experience

Resources - Video 2

Every individual's pain - experience of pain - is different. And so the best quality of care that you can provide includes the fundamental notion that you have to treat the individual. And so you have to help to treat the individual given their context, given their - you know, we have such a diversity of patients - multicultural. We live in a very multicultural environment. And it is very important to keep that in mind because different - there may be a variation in experiences of pain, and how people talk about pain, how they would like to express their pain. You know, using language that's appropriate and sensitive and empathetic, and listening to a patient. These are all very basic sort of skills, but they go a very long way in helping to customize, for patients, what their pain management plan should look like. And the patient should be an integral part of that. So the patient should let the healthcare provider know what works and what doesn't work, and they are equally involved in advocating for themselves, and should be encouraged to do so. And I think that that's, you know, when you treat the individual and you understand where they come from and you understand the meaning of their pain, I think a comprehensive treatment plan becomes a lot easier to develop for that patient.

We need to understand that there may be differences in individuals from different backgrounds. And you know - but I would be very cautious to generalize how every individual in - about how a particular group of individuals or from a cultural background - would generally experience pain, because I don't believe that. I believe that it's still the individual that you're treating. You know, some patients may feel discouraged about their disease process if they're experiencing a lot of pain, and when you start to understand the layers of what their experience is a bit better, they may not be taking their pain medication because of a certain reason. And so it's important to sort of, you know, understand the patient, understand where they come from emotionally or how they interpret their health problems, and what the meaning of pain is in the context of that health problem. And so I would not want to come across as, you know, suggesting that there are different experiences based on particular cultures, and what I mean is that we need to take into account that there may be cultural expressions of pain that are not readily understood, and that as a healthcare provider it is our responsibility to treat that individual within the context of their medical healthcare background, their problem, their medical problem, but also

understanding the individual as a whole, and that includes their cultural background, and what the meaning of pain might be in that cultural background.