

PRINT-Videos seek to create empathy between patients, families and nurses

"The Silent Exchange" videos for nurses and families are available for download

Picture this: A haggard nurse walks into a patient's room, clipboard in hand, heaving a huge sigh when she sees the patient and his daughter. The patient's daughter immediately frowns and the two glare at each other.

It's an inauspicious start to a nurse-patient encounter. But what happened right before? Why are they both so disgruntled?

The answer is the basis for two short, animated videos, which are intended to help patients and nurses empathize with each other in an era when incivility in hospital settings is on the rise.

The videos were produced by associate dean for practice and community partnerships [Carolyn Dickens](#), PhD '17, ACNP, FAANP, with [Eileen Knightly](#), MHA, RN, vice president and chief nursing officer at OSF HealthCare Little Company of Mary Medical Center in Evergreen Park, Illinois. The project had grant funding from [the Community Health Advocacy program](#).

Knightly says the videos are designed to promote empathy.

"When patients and families arrive for care at hospitals they are scared, vulnerable and anxious. Our Mission Partners (employees) also have life challenges of their own and might not feel their best and when met with anger or anxiety multiple times a day it is not easy to serve with compassion. These videos serve as a reminder that meeting people where they are and leading with kindness makes every situation better." -Eileen Knightly

Hospitals, clinics and care settings are encouraged to [download](#) the videos in and use them to promote civility between patients and nursing staff.

'A Nurse's Day'

The video series, called The Silent Exchange, largely relies on visuals so that the message is accessible to everyone, regardless of language.

The two videos, "[A Nurse's Day](#)" and "[A Loved One's Day](#)," offer insights into both sides of the same nurse-patient interaction.

In "A Nurse's Day," a nurse arrives at work to see an unrelenting patient schedule and sets out to respond to a non-stop barrage of call lights from sick and angry patients.

The video is intended for viewing by patients and families to highlight the pressures and demands on nurses that are largely invisible to those they serve.

"Our goal is for hospitals and clinics to download and disseminate these videos widely – to nurses, patients and their families," Dickens says. "We've seen a rise in incivility between patients and staff in hospital settings, and we know this has led to staff burnout and nursing shortages. It's detrimental not only to the well-being of nurses, but also to patient care and outcomes."

'A Loved One's Day'

In "A Loved One's Day," a harried woman must leave work in the middle of the day and find childcare for her daughter so she can go to the hospital, where her father has been admitted. An attempt to ask for help using the call light goes unanswered for 40 minutes before the nurse arrives.

The video is intended for viewing by nursing staff to remind them of the fear and frustration patients and their families feel in unfamiliar clinical settings when they or a loved one is ailing.

Both videos end with the same message: "Everyone's stressed. Let's help each other."

"We want these videos to be a reminder of what may have preceded the interaction that patients and clinicians have in the hospital room, and we're hopeful they help patients, families and staff treat each other more kindly," Dickens says.