

Chiropractic Patient Education Using a White Board

Using the opportunity of each patient visit to enlarge a patient's understanding of chiropractic principles has always been challenging. Do you just start talking? Do you try to turn some patient comment into some tortured chiropractic-oriented observation? And what about patients who just aren't interested? Do you force-feed them anyway? Or maybe you rely on the chiropractic art on your walls?

Using a dry erase whiteboard can simplify your efforts.

Each week (or day!) write a different ambiguous statement on a whiteboard mounted in your adjusting room(s). Don't confuse these with catchy chiropractic slogans or chiropractic sayings that form the basis of countless chiroisms!

Here's a tried and true favourite to kick things off:



Use ambiguous statements or questions that require explanation or clarification. Like this one. Avoid complete thoughts, slogans or sayings.

"What's the word, 'vomit' up there for?"

When patients ask for the meaning of the statement, they are giving you "permission" to share some aspect of the chiropractic message. Go for it! They won't ask if the statement is self explanatory.

This method avoids tormenting patients who aren't interested and gives curious patients something to look forward to on each visit. If patients don't ask for clarification about something you've written, simply move on.

Below are just a few examples you can start using right away....

Inscription	Talking Points
Vomit	"What's the word vomit up there for?" "Oh, that's there to remind me. If you go out to dinner tonight and enjoy a great tasting meal, but find yourself vomiting two hours later, are you sick or are you well?" Health is how you <i>function</i> , not how you feel.
Physical Emotional Chemical	Obviously these are the three causes of subluxations. Most patients can understand how physical trauma can cause spinal problems, but overlook the other two. Consider asking patients to name an emotional and chemical cause of subluxations during their visit.
The first symptom	Most patients judge their health by how they feel. If you're interested in growing a wellness practice, this notion may be your greatest barrier. Ask patients if they know the top causes of death in the country today. Follow up by asking what the first symptom of these largely lifestyle-induced diseases are. (Death!) So much for using how you feel as a guide for how healthy you are!
Golden Gate Bridge	It's the most famous bridge in the world. What most don't know is that the reason it's still standing is that it is constantly being maintained. From our Wellness Care brochure, "Exposed to the elements and the stress of 40,000 cars a day, preserving the Golden Gate Bridge is a full time job. When painting crews finish at one end, they immediately start over at the other. Staying well requires constant attention, too." No, the human body isn't a machine or a static structure, but it requires constant attention. Regular chiropractic care is just one of the ways to help preserve good health (function).
Cough Sneeze Fever	Ask patients if they think these symptoms are an indication that someone is sick. "Sounds like a trick question." (If it is, tell me the trick.) It's a powerful way to remind patients that true health is about how well their body is working. Explain how these common symptoms are signs that the body is functioning correctly. (Add "vomit" to the list for even more fun!)
Car keys.	A key to the ignition activates the engineering built into the automobile. An adjustment activates the inborn ability of the patient to heal. Chiropractors are merely facilitators.

Sick-Not Sick-Well	Most patients think if they are symptom-free that they are healthy. This helps change their perception by suggesting that there is something beyond merely feeling good. A great springboard for discussing other aspect of "wellness."
How you function. How you feel.	"Which one best indicates your level of health?" "Can you think of a situation in which you feel lousy, but are in excellent health?" (Fever. Vomiting.)
Nutrition Rest and exercise Proper hygiene Genetics Nerve supply Positive mental attitude	All of these aspects affect one's health. Ask your patients to rate them from 1 to 6 in importance. Not only will you get some interesting insights into your patient's understanding, you'll spark some very interesting conversations!
What is health?	"When you hear the word health, what does that word mean to you?" Most chiropractors use this word repeatedly throughout their day. They think patients attribute the same meaning to the word as they do. They don't. No wonder they leave when they feel better.
M i k E g s r e d	Milk. Eggs. Bread. A simple shopping list that gets a little confusing with a couple of essential letters missing! Just like what a subluxation can do with nerve messages to and from the brain!
Eat Germs	Do you eat germs? (almost always yes) Then, why aren't you sick? (my immune system fights it) So what is the cause of sickness? The presence of germs? (no um, the immune system not working?) To help sickness should we kill germs or increase immune response? (duh) What are some ways we can do this?
M > P > C	It means M; if you have something that requires maintenance and it isn't maintained it will create a P (problem), and if not dealt with will create a C (crisis). When care begins and we eliminate the C (crisis) what is still left? The P (problem) that needs correcting and then maintenance.

No Pain No Gain?	Ask the patient if there are any benefits to chiropractic AFTER the pain goes away.
A Full Bucket	When your system is overloaded with internal and external stressors and it can't handle everything you, or the outside world, have resting on your shoulders, it "overflows" and you lack the capacity to respond to even the smallest stressors.
Smoke Detector	When the patient asks if it's fire safety month I ask "Do you have smoke detectors in your house?" They answer in the affirmative. "If the alarm woke you up at night what would you do?" They answer get out to the house, etc. "Why wouldn't you just remove the batteries and go back to sleep?" They answer (shocked) how dangerous that would be because it's the fire/smoke that's the real problem, not the alarm. "Well how is that different then covering up symptoms with medication?"
"I'm going to stop brushing my teeth"	Imagine: bad breath, yellow teeth, bleeding gums, tooth decay and then pain. The dentist will likely suggest brushing as a preventive measure. Same with regular chiropractic care—before the pain. By the way, if you don't maintain your teeth, you can get dentures or expensive implants. But no surgeon can replace your vertebrae due to spinal decay!
Frog Soup	If you put a frog in hot water, it jumps out right away. If you put one in cold water and slowly heat it, it stays in the water until death. The second frog accommodates stress and fails to take appropriate action because it happens on a subtle gradient. We do the same. We accommodate stress until we can't, producing subluxation and then a loss of health.