

# Psychological role play, anyone?

We have all been taught the importance of empathy as a crucial component of a therapeutic patient-provider relationship. While we know this is true for patient interactions, how often do we use empathy to improve our work environment?

On days that I am having a hard time staying present with my patients, I find it helpful to think, "What if our roles were reversed? What if I was the patient in chronic pain? How would I be thinking? What would I be hoping to get from this appointment? What would I think the nurse practitioner is actually saying?" It is fascinating to me how this changes my whole experience of the interaction.

But then let's take it to the next level.

How would I feel if I was the secretary, telling the patients that they have to reschedule because they are 30 minutes late and we cannot accommodate them? What is her experience of dealing with the sometimes irate patient while trying to get the other patients registered so the providers aren't harassing her about the schedule?

What would I be thinking if I were the medical assistant, answering all the patient phone calls, sending the messages to the providers, waiting for a response while the patient calls 3 more times for an answer? How would I feel calling the patient back for the 3rd time? How would I respond to running multiple providers because we are working short staffed? What would I think when one more thing needs to be documented with each visit?

And what would I do if I were the nurse manager, taking care of all the business needs, the employees who need FMLA paperwork filled out, the

doctors who keep changing their time off and thereby the whole office schedule, all while answering phones because someone called out?

And if I really want to be over the top, I try psychological role playing as myself (yes I know this sounds insane). If I could look at myself as an outsider and evaluate what I was thinking or feeling, how could I treat myself with empathy? How could I silence the inner critic? What would I tell myself to do in this situation?

Try psychological role play today- the result is gratitude and appreciation.

Gratitude makes everything better.

Happy Thanksgiving!

*Be brilliant, be kind,*

*Megan*