



Composing an SBAR

What is SBAR?

A technique that can be used to facilitate prompt and appropriate communication.

S – Situation

B – Background

A – Assessment

R – Recommendation



Overview

SBAR has gained popularity in healthcare settings as it is a way for health care professionals to communicate effectively with one another.

Benefits

- Important information can be transferred accurately.
- Allows for short, organized and predictable flow of information.
- SBAR has been suggested as a means to overcome problems by applying a system and structure to the presentation of information.



History

SBAR was first utilized for nuclear submarines by the military, and later adopted by the aviation industry.

How SBAR Became Widely Used in Healthcare

SBAR was introduced to rapid response teams (RRT) at Kaiser Permanente in Colorado in 2002, to investigate patient safety.

The main purpose was to alleviate communication problems traced from the differences in communication styles between healthcare professionals.

SBAR was later adopted by many other health care organizations.

SBAR Uses in Healthcare

The Royal College of Physicians of London, UK, recommends the use of SBAR during the handover of care between medical teams when treating patients who are seriously ill or at risk of deteriorating.

SBAR is an included tool in the Interventions to Reduce Acute Care Transfers (INTERACT II) project, a US measure to reduce rehospitalization among residents of long-term care (LTC) facilities.

SBAR is one of the most popular and recommended handover mnemonic systems in use within healthcare.



Before Beginning an SBAR

A few things are necessary for a health care professional to know before beginning an SBAR conversation.

- A thorough assessment of the patient should be done.
- The patient's chart should be on hand with a list of current medications, allergies, IV fluids, and labs.
- Vital signs should be completed before making the call, and the patient's code status should be known and reported.

Medical-based Information

Examples of medical-based information include:

- Date and reason for admission
- Most recent vital signs and vital signs outside of normal parameters
- Current medications
- Allergies
- Labs
- Code status and other clinically important information

Elements of an SBAR

Situation

Goal

Determine and communicate the:

- What (is going on)
- Why (professionals are needed)
- Status (such as chest pain or nausea).

Key Points

- Become familiar with the environment and the patient.
- Identify the problem and concern. Provide a brief description of the scenario.
- Be brief as this assessment should last no more than 10 seconds.
- Provide patient information - name, age, sex, and reason for admission.

Background

Goal

Identify and provide the diagnosis or reason for the patient's admission, their medical status, and history.

Key Points

- Determine the reason or context of the patient's visit.
- Prepare the patient's chart.
- Provide important medical-based information to set up the assessment of data.

Elements of an SBAR

Assessment

Goal

At this stage, the situation is surveyed to determine the most appropriate course of action.

Key Points

- The medical professional states what they believe the problem is based on current assessments and medical findings.
- The assessment should include a focused assessment of problem areas, all lines coming in and out of the patient's body, input and output, bowel and bladder, nutrition, and pain status.
- Any impertinent information is avoided unless asked for.

Recommendation

Goal

Health care professionals give very precise and descriptive explanations on exactly what they need.

Key Points

- Possible solutions are discussed.
- An explicit statement of what is required, how urgent, and what action needs to be taken is critical.
- Prepare to be able to answer any question the physician may ask.
- Discussion with another colleague may help.
- Before contacting a physician, review information about medical records, medication, administration records, and patient flow.

Example SBAR 1

Below is a basic example of how SBAR communication can be used in a healthcare setting, but SBAR can be used as a leadership communication tool in any industry.

Situation

The patient has been hospitalized with an upper respiratory infection. Respiration are labored and have increased to 28 breaths per minute within the past 30 minutes. Usual interventions are ineffective.

Background

The patient is a 72-year-old female with a history of congestive heart failure and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Her husband has requested to be notified if the patient's condition changes.

Assessment

Patient's breathing has deteriorated in the last 30 minutes. Usual interventions (i.e., inhaler, oxygen, breathing treatments) have been ineffective and are not relieving symptoms.

Recommendation

Consider intubation immediately. Call physician STAT or initiate Rapid Response Team.

Example SBAR 2

This is a direct example that shows how SBAR communication is used in a hospital setting involving communication between a preoperative nurse and operating room nurse to effectively assess and diagnose the patient and correct the problem.

Situation

"Mary, I'm going to be sending Mr. Porter over to you in a few minutes for repair of his fractured ankle. I want you to know what's going on with him. I'm concerned about his emotional status. I've also alerted Dr Anesthesiologist and Dr Surgeon about my concern, but they have agreed to go ahead with the surgery because he needs this procedure to salvage his foot."

Background

"He was in an auto accident last Friday, and his wife was killed. His children are all at the funeral home making arrangements for her burial. He's made some comments about not wanting to live. His vital signs are stable; the foot is cool and slightly mottled. We've just given him some Versed."

Assessment

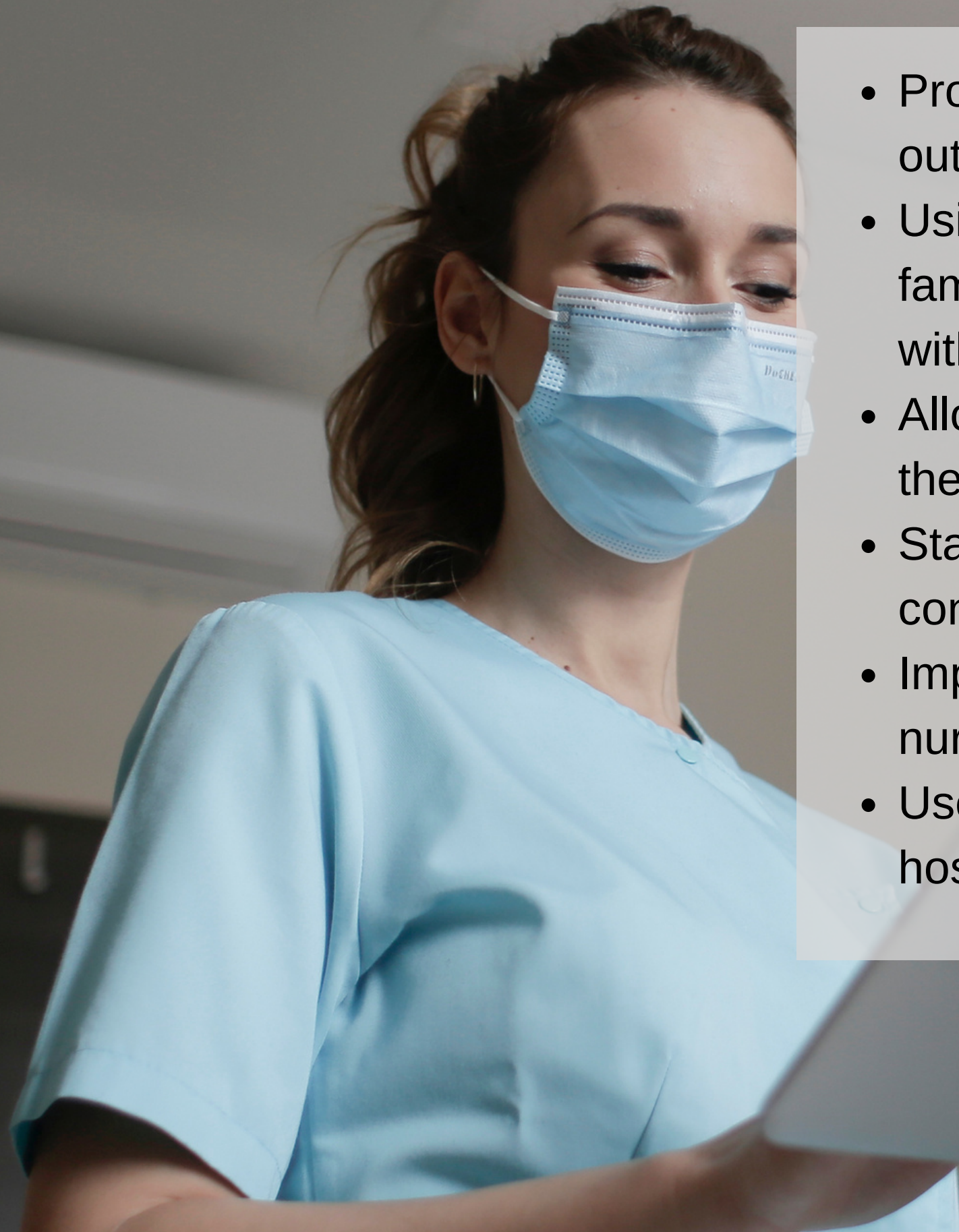
"I think his emotional status is such that this will be a very difficult period of time for him, especially during induction and awakening from anesthesia."

Recommendation

"I suggest that you meet him as soon as possible and stay with him during induction and emergence from anesthesia."

Effects of Use

- Provides for more effective and enhanced family and patient outcomes.
- Using SBAR when producing bedside reports increases patient and family satisfaction and increases their level of comfort when dealing with outlying situations.
- Allows nurses to be more effective when giving reports outside of the patients room.
- Standardizes information to be given and ensures reporting is concise, objective and relevant.
- Improved the communication relationship between doctors and nurses which caused an increase in the overall health of patients.
- Used in quality improvement projects to examine ways of avoiding hospitalizations.



Limitations

- If the recipient is unfamiliar with the concept of SBAR.
- SBAR knowledge requires thorough education about the subject matter complete with necessary follow-up. A supportive environment, role-playing, and a skills assessment may help with the process.
- Further emphasis must be given on recommendation as the R in SBAR has been the weak point of assessments. Giving advice to physicians on what to do is found to be intimidating for some.
- Health care professionals and units must find an alternative way to deal with the patients and their families decisions if they chose not to be awakened and involved in bedside charting and SBAR assessment.
- Make plans to share new or sensitive information before or after bedside report and not in front of the patient/family if it has not been disclosed.
- Using SBAR communication when bedside charting causes a disadvantage for itself through the sharing of confidential information with the patient where it could be over heard by other patients.

SBAR Worksheet

Try it yourself! Think of a topic you can use in regards to communication or solving a problem and complete the SBAR.

Situation

Background

Assessment

Recommendation

References

(n.d.). ASQ. *SBAR*. Retrieved from <https://asq.org/quality-resources/sbar#:~:text=SBAR%20Example&text=Situation%3A%20The%20patient%20has%20been,Usual%20interventions%20are%20ineffective>

(n.d.). Wikipedia. *SBAR*. Retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SBAR>

Course Design and Copyright

Course Design

This Canva asset was created and designed by Alex Criswell.

Course Copyright

This textual content was retrieved from primarily from Wikipedia, as well as from other references.



alexbcriswell.com

Designed By

Alex B. Criswell