



8.6 Optional: SBAR Basics

SBAR was originally developed by the military. “S” stands for Situation, “B” for Background, “A” for Assessment and “R” for Recommendations. Reports show that more than half of all errors in health care are related in some way to communication. This can be in the form of miscommunication or a lack of communication all together. Miscommunication always wastes time.

SBAR forms a clear mental picture of the situation at that moment by providing the framework for clear, concise communication. SBAR usually helps to take an unneeded emotion out of conversations and e-mails. Using SBAR as the model for verbal and written communications can help save time and increase safety. SBAR can be used at shift change, lunch and break relief, patient transfers, physician discussion and e-mails. Some hospitals also use the SBAR format for meeting agendas and minutes.

S – Situation

- State what is happening at the present time that has warranted SBAR communication.
(Tip: “S” is usually short and to the point.)

B – Background

- Explain circumstances leading to this situation. This helps put the situation into context for the reader/listener. Background information should be relevant to the situation.

A – Assessment

- What is the current situation? What potential problems or adverse events exist?

R – Recommendations

- What interventions should take place? What needs to be done?
(Tip: Include what you think needs to happen.)

SBAR Example

Nursing Unit to Radiology

S – I am transporting Mr. Jones from room 221. He is scheduled for a CT of the abdomen.

B – Patient was admitted with abdominal pain, unknown etiology.

A – Mr. Jones is alert and oriented. His vital signs are stable. He is complaining of 3/10 abdominal pain after medication. He is steady on feet with assistance.

R – Assist with transfers. Contact me at 65432 if patient complains of pain or condition changes.