

Top 10 Soft Skills Needed In Health Care

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A successful career in health care takes more than a top-notch degree program or hands-on training. Employers of health care workers are looking at more on your resume than just your clinical abilities. It's also important you develop your so-called "soft skills," which can also be called "personality skills." These are the personal attributes you use to influence and enhance the way you communicate and relate to patients, colleagues and peers.

Soft skills can impact your career prospects, your job performance and other activities in life. Employers are often looking for soft skills in addition to qualifications. In many professions, including health care, your soft skills can help your career progression over time more than your technical skills.

Interpersonal Skills for Health Care Management

Empathy

In health care, it's important that you can empathize with patients and the difficult situations that others are facing. Empathy is often cited as a core aspect of effective, therapeutic consultations, though there is limited research into its impact.

Communication Skills

The core of many workplaces is communication, but for health care workers it's even more important. Health care workers need to speak with patients and their families in addition to routinely communicating with coworkers. According to the Institute for Healthcare Communication, evidence indicates that there are strong positive relationships between a health care team member's communication skills and a patient's capacity to follow through with medical recommendations, self-manage a chronic medical condition, and adopt preventive health behaviors.

patients' perceptions of the quality of the healthcare they received are highly dependent on the quality of their interactions with their healthcare clinician and team. This suggests that strong communication skills are vital for effective patient care and satisfaction.

Teamwork

An important trait in health care workers is a team player attitude. Many health care fields are like team sports, with many people working toward patient care. It's vital that you know how to collaborate with these peers in the best interest of the patient.

Personal Skills for Health Care Workers

Work Ethic

Work ethic is a set of values based on hard work. There are many components of work ethic, including professionalism, punctuality, your overall attitude and behavior. Some businesses define work ethic as the belief in the moral benefit and importance of work and its inherent ability to strengthen character.

Because many health care fields require hours that go beyond your standard 9-to-5 job, it's vital that future health care employees nurture a strong work ethic. Health care is a demanding field. The hours are long. The subject matter can be grim. Without the drive to succeed in your career, you may find it stagnates.

Stress Management

In health care, literally, lives could be at stake. That's a lot of pressure to have to handle. Health care workers are at high risk of burnout if they do not have proper stress-management techniques. Burnout is the experience of long-term exhaustion and diminished interest in work.

The most successful health care workers not only know how to handle pressure, but they also thrive on it. But to avoid burnout it's also important for health care workers to have good stress management practices and to know how to take space from their demanding careers.

Positive Attitude

All employees can benefit from a positive mental attitude but in health care, this soft skill is particularly useful. Because of the demands of the job, the stress of teamwork, and the frequent meetings with patients, it's important that health care workers keep a sunny outlook. The harsh realities of health care can easily wear someone down, which can lead to stress and other negative consequences.

Flexibility

Because many careers in health care don't stick to typical 9-to-5 hours, flexibility is key to working on a team. Your peers may need you to pick up a shift or stay late. A demanding patient may take up more of your day than you planned for.

Beyond just dealing with your schedule, you also need to be adaptable so as to handle new, different, or changing environments. Health care fields deal with something different every day. If you don't know how to abandon a routine and adapt easily you may struggle in your career.

Time Management

Time management is vital in any career but in health care where lives are literally on the line, it's even more important. You'll often be pulled in multiple directions at work so it's important you know how to prioritize and triage pressing matters.

A health care professional's day can be very busy and it can sometimes feel like there aren't enough hours in the day. Focusing on priorities can help you be more successful in your career.

Confidence

Because health care roles are patient-facing, it's important that you project confidence in your work. Confidence is recognized as one of the most influential factors to affect performance. Feeling confident in your skill set directly communicates with patients and affects their experience.

Receptive Attitude

You don't know everything, no matter how excellent your training was. A receptive attitude means you can handle criticism and enact change when needed. Health care is an ever-evolving field. Even employees at the top of their game will ultimately have gaps in their knowledge due to advances in medicine, technology, and procedures. You need to have the ability to accept and learn from criticism.

Consider Customer Service in the Medical Field

In medicine, much of what you will do is patient-facing, which is really just customer service. Many skills that apply to customer service roles will serve you well in medicine. This includes:

Attitude

Communication

Confidence

Patience

Attentiveness

Adaptability

Good customer service in the medical field permeates all levels of employees. Patients want to have good medical care, prompt billing, friendly and knowledgeable technicians and helpful staff. Patients can be scared about their health and need health care workers with a soft touch to help improve their patient experience.

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