



Title The #hellomynameis story: 'Through adversity comes legacy'

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Introduction

Communication in any setting is a vital and effective tool that when done well is brilliant, but when not done so well, could prove agonising for the patient, relatives and healthcare workers.

Through the use of social media, #hellomynameis is a campaign designed to remind healthcare staff to introduce themselves to their patients and family; and then use that opportunity to help build a relationship with them. At its core, the message of the #hellomynameis campaign is about caring.

The #hellomynameis campaign is based on four key principles:

1. Communication:

Is of paramount importance. Timely and effective communication which is which is bespoke to the patient makes a huge difference and starts with a simple introduction.

2. The little things:

The little things really do matter. They are not little at all, they are indeed huge and of central importance in any practice of healthcare and in society. This could be someone sitting down next to you rather than looming over you or holding the door open for someone coming through.

3. Patient at the heart of all decisions:

“No decision about me without me”. These words ring true in healthcare as the most important person is the patient and everything should be done with them in mind.

4. See me:

See me as a person first and foremost before disease or bed number. Individuals are more than just an illness, they are a human being, they are a family member, they are a friend etc and we should all remember to see more of an individual than just the reason they are using healthcare.

This Perspectives Brief will go through how an experience of poor communication turned into a social movement that improves communication in healthcare and beyond.

Background

Hello, my name is Chris Pointon (@pointonchris) and I am the co-founder of the #hellomynameis campaign and husband of the late Dr. Kate Granger MBE. My inspiring wife Kate was a doctor, but also a terminally ill cancer patient who was diagnosed with a desmoplastic small round cell tumour in 2011 and it is her experience on the ‘other side’ as a doctor turned patient, that resulted in the #hellomynameis campaign.

Since its formation five years ago, #hellomynameis has tirelessly fundraised for charity, raising over \$655,000 to date. Kate has also been recognised with an MBE, along with awards including a Special Achievement Award from the *British Medical Journal*.

Kate’s dedication to healthcare through the campaign, as well as authoring two books about her experience as a patient within the health system, has led to her inspiring many thousands of people across the world.

How did the campaign start

The #hellomynameis campaign came out of a hospital admission that Kate and I experienced in 2013, where she was in pain and feeling quite low. Kate's discomfort and frustration was increasingly made worse by the fact that quite a few staff had failed to introduce themselves.

When we talked about it that evening and Kate was complaining about it somewhat, I just said to her, 'Darling, stop whingeing and let's do something about it—let's use your social media presence and come up with a campaign—let's call it something like #hellomynameis'—and it was born.

Kate already had a large Twitter following, so we felt we could use the power of social media to get the message out. At the start, we thought this would be a two-week, two-month, or maybe six-month phenomenon. But look how far it has come!

The amount of uptake from the very start, within UK healthcare first and then internationally, has been unbelievable. We now operate in over 20 countries across 6 continents, and receive many plaudits across the globe for a simple campaign that has revolutionised global healthcare.

My ambition now is to keep spreading the message across as many healthcare and other establishments as I can, making sure that organisations embed the change into their culture.

Why is it so successful?

The key to the success of #hellomynameis lies in its simplicity. Introducing yourself takes very little time to do, it is relatable, costs little money, helps build trust and is the start of a therapeutic relationship between two people. It is about common courtesy, really.

Lessons learnt

#hellomynameis is a campaign that probably should not have been needed in the first place. Many of us think we are courteous and communicate well, but if you stop and think about it, maybe we are not. That is why this campaign continues to be so important for health care and wider industries across the world.

Not everyone has always been as receptive as we would have liked. Along the way we initially suffered some resistance from various pockets of people across healthcare who did not understand why the campaign was needed to begin with.

However, once we had proven how simple it really is, its benefits and how broadly people across the world were engaging with the campaign, we were able to convince them of its need.

Social media is a great platform to use for campaigns of this nature. However, we also acknowledge that getting buy-in from all levels of healthcare in the early days of the campaign helped #hellomynameis become adopted within organisations around the world.

Since the introduction of the campaign, we have gathered increasing evidence that introducing yourself actually improves patient outcomes, that if you have a good relationship with your healthcare staff that you are more likely to trust them, you are more likely to share intimate information.

Many NHS trusts now use #hellomynameis principles it as part of their trust values and I receive so many messages from across the world on a daily basis highlighting the positive impact of the campaign on individuals' own hospital experiences.

More studies are due to be carried out in 2018–19, but my question remains 'Why would you not want to introduce yourself?'

Communication is key

A key part of communication is making sure that it is appropriate for the situation, and considering the impact it will have on the individual or group receiving it. It is also worth ensuring that you think before you speak and are not dismissive of patients' concerns or answers.

Across organisations there are many people that are fantastic communicators—but there are also those that need some assistance. Those who are effective communicators need to be recognised as champions and role models for those who want to improve.

One of the worst situations I recall from Kate's time in hospital was when a junior doctor was sent in to tell Kate some bad news—they did not look at Kate when they delivered the news, and scurried out of the room once they had said what they wanted to say.

Communication takes many forms and is not just verbal—non-verbal signs are equally as important to think about, and can be majorly significant.

Facial expressions, eye contact, gestures and postures should not be defensive or intimidating. Little things like sitting down next to a patient so you are at the same eye level rather than looming over them at the end of the bed makes a big difference.

Change takes time

It can take several months, if not years, to embed change into an organisation, but such a simple change with such a simple message can have a huge impact.

I think that is why so many organisations have chosen to make this part of their culture, to add it to their office signature, or make it part of their name badges.

The campaign is about people who are willing and wanting to connect with patients in a meaningful way.

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