

## Do or Delegate?

Stanley Greenfield, RHU

Do you do or delegate? I'll bet you have never been asked that question before. It is a very important question, and the answer is crucial to your professional success - and your mental health! So, I will ask you again: Do you do or delegate? Not sure? Let's take a closer look at what it all means.

What I am referring to is how you handle all of the things - big and small, important and unimportant - that come up every day in your practice. Do you do them, or do you delegate them to someone else to handle? That may not sound like such a big deal, but trust me, it is a very big deal, and one that requires a lot of thought. It is almost like the famous line from William Shakespeare, "To be or not to be; that is the question." But that is not as important as my question to you: "Do you do or delegate? That is the real question!"

I would suggest that before you answer that question, you make a list of all of the tasks that take place on a daily basis in your office. Once you have made that list, look it over and see what tasks you do and which ones you delegate to others. You might want to put a "1" by the ones you do, and a "2" by the ones you delegate to others.

The tasks that should have a "1" by them include adjusting patients, doing an initial exam or going through a report of findings - things like that. Tasks such as opening the mail, filing insurance, answering the telephone, watering the plants or picking up trash should have a "2" next to them. The priority items that get the patients into the office, treat the patients, and keep them as patients are the things that you do. Everything else can and should be delegated.

Have you ever spent the time to take a good look at all of the things you do in your office? If you do, I am sure that you will discover you are doing some things that are not on any priority list, much less on your own list of "1s." I refer to these as "busy" items. They keep you busy and take up time, so you feel you are doing something worthwhile. But you aren't - you are just filling up time! The problem is that when you start to get busy, you still continue to do these tasks and wonder why you cannot get everything done that you need to, especially the important things. It is time to re-evaluate everything that you do.

If you delegate a task to someone, the person needs to understand that he or she is now responsible for doing that task, and you must make sure that it is listed in his or her job description. Yes, you need to have a written job description for all employees, listing everything that is expected of them. You need to have a copy of the job description in each employee's file, signed and dated by the employee, so that he or she knows what is expected. (By the way, until you get this done, this task should have a "1" next to it, so get it done now!)

The goal is to know that everything in your office is taken care of by someone, and someone has the responsibility for it. Your list should get smaller and smaller as you delegate properly. It is also a nice feeling to know that things will not "slip through the cracks." Cracks, over time, tend to get larger, and

can cause major problems in your office.

I am sure that some readers feel I have gone a little too far with this "do or delegate" thing. You may be in a very small office with very little help or staffing to pick up the duties that should be delegated to someone else. Well, if you have (or don't have) any staff, you can still delegate some of the tasks that you are now doing. It might even require that you hire some part-timers to get these things done. Yes, that does cost money, but if it frees you to do the things that you should be doing, it is well worth it. This is not a time to be penny-wise and dollar-foolish. For you to be doing things that anyone else can do for less than \$10 per hour is dollar-foolish. In the time that you save, you could be developing another source of referrals to the practice, which should generate more than \$10 per hour! Now do you see what I mean?

It is now time to start putting that list together. Then go back and put a "1" or "2" by each task. The goal should be to get all of the "2s" delegated to someone else - someone who is held accountable for getting those things done. Your theme should be, "Ours is not to do or die, but to do or delegate!"

*Stanley Greenfield, RHU*  
*1829 Green Heron Court*  
*Jacksonville Beach, Florida 32250*  
*(800) 585-1555*  
*fax: (904) 247-1266*  
[stan@stanleygreenfield.com](mailto:stan@stanleygreenfield.com)

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