

Value: Empathy

Definition: The ability to place yourself in another person's position. Empathy means that you respond thoughtfully to how someone is feeling and express understanding of what they are going through.

Empathy is related to compassion, a word we use frequently, which is not only understanding a person's feelings, but also wanting to help them. When you practice empathy, you recognize that someone else's thoughts, feelings and experiences may be different from your own. To that end, empathy is important in advancing our work in the areas of diversity, inclusion and cultural competence.

The following stories show how staff demonstrate empathy.

[Patient Marries His Longtime Beloved on Tower 10B](#)

When a patient with terminal metastatic bone cancer and his long-time partner expressed the desire to be married, Spiritual Care Services and the patient's care team organized a wedding on Tower 10B.

[Brookside Staff Volunteer in Haiti](#)

During a recent medical mission to Haiti, Brookside Community Health Center's Hubertus Kiefl, MD, and a small team cared for approximately 700 patients over four days.

[Patient Receives Video Greeting from Patriots Kicker](#)

A group of staff coordinated with the New England Patriots to have a video message produced for a patient in the Neuro ICU to boost her spirits during a difficult time for her and her family.

[My Heart Beats Because of Manny: Donor Family and Recipient Bond](#)

Michael Givertz, MD, helps the mother of a heart donor listen to her son's heart beat once again, via a stethoscope pressed to the heart transplant recipient's chest.

[Cardiotonics Lift Spirits with Holiday Songs](#)

Each Christmas Day, a group of clinicians serenades patients, families and staff throughout Shapiro and the Tower with holiday favorites.

[Finding the Human Connection in Quiet Moments](#)

Matthew Carty, MD, takes a few moments to speak quietly with a patient in advance of a major surgery.

[ED Adopts Local School to Help Children in Need](#)

The Emergency Department adopts a local school to help children in need through various drives.

[Bringing out the Best in Me](#)

Medical assistant Kimberly Ruiz puts herself in the shoes of her patient and takes extra measures to ensure he can afford his prescription.

[Chaplains Bring a Spiritual Presence to Patients Receiving Stem Cells](#)

Chaplains offer to bless stem cells prior to a patient's stem cell transplant (a treatment for some types of cancer).

[The Brigham Way: Remembering the Reason We're Here](#)

Pharmacist Mike Cotugno, RPh, goes out of his way to ensure a recently diagnosed cancer patient receives a vaccine she needs prior to having surgery and beginning chemotherapy, even though the vaccine was typically given on a day other than when she arrived.

[Noticing the Miracles Around Us](#)

For the nurses on 15CD, “allowing for miracles” is the essence of the care they provide to their patients and their families, who are primarily surgical oncology patients.

[The Brigham Way: Bringing History to Life](#)

Dr. Gordon Schiff makes it a priority to help one of his patients get tickets to the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C. The patient would be visiting D.C., likely for the last time, and was an activist in the civil rights era.

[Defying the Odds: BWH Neurosurgery Patient Walks Again](#)

Members of a patient’s Neurosurgery care team were moved to tears when they saw their patient, who was paralyzed after a car accident, walk into their clinic for a follow-up appointment.

[BWH Double Arm Transplant Recipient Raises Donate Life Flag](#)

In observance of National Donate Life Month, BWH held a flag-raising ceremony to honor the lives of people who have been impacted by organ and tissue donation and those who have received the life-changing gift of a transplant. BWH patient and double arm transplant recipient Will Lautzenheiser performed the honor of raising the flag at the Brigham.

[Father’s Day: BWH Dad Switches Research Focus for Daughter](#)

After Arash Mostaghimi, MD, director of the Dermatology Inpatient Service and co-director of the Complex Medical Fellowship Program at BWH, learned that his daughter had alopecia areata, he decided to devote 25 percent of his research to the disease.

[Celebrating Family](#)

Several times a year, the BWH Spiritual Care Services Department arranges for and often presides at weddings held in the hospital. Usually, a patient is nearing the end of his or her life and family members would like a wedding to take place while their loved one is still alive. This story focused on the wedding of an engaged couple who made the decision to have their wedding at BWH in the presence of the father of the groom, who was a patient at BWH.

[Service of Remembrance: A Meaningful Way to Honor Patients, Families and Teams](#)

Following in the footsteps of the NICU and MICU, other services including thoracics, the neurosciences, and Palliative Care (in conjunction with DFCI), hold annual or periodic remembrance services.

[BWH Care Team Helps Organize Patient’s Bedside Graduation](#)

When this young patient’s care team recognized that medicine could not save her life, they were committed to finding some way to provide emotional support – a reflection not only of the team’s compassion, but also of their close relationships they build with their patients.

[Not Missing a Beat: Keeping LVAD Patients Safe at BWH and Beyond](#)

Erin Lyons, PA-C, raised money to produce personalized luggage tags for LVAD patients who must always carry a “VAD bag” containing backup controller and batteries. The tags bear the patient’s name, which type of VAD he or she has and emergency contact information for the VAD clinic at BWH. The tags can help EMS personnel provide appropriate care in a medical emergency, as lifesaving methods such as defibrillation need to be adapted for VAD patients. [Also in President’s Perspective.](#)

[The Brigham Way: The Better Side of Humanity](#)

When Cheryl Richardson came to visit her father at BWH, she felt cared for before she even set foot inside our doors, thanks to Khadda El Bouazzaoui, of Valet Services. Khadda treated Cheryl with kindness, recognizing that her situation was sensitive and parking her car so that she did not have to use the garage.

[News of Note: Stepping Strong Once Again](#)

The story of how Jim Ewing came to receive a first of its kind experimental amputation at BWH embodies so many of the things we hold dear: leading-edge science, compassionate care, collaboration and, importantly, the generosity that makes all of this possible. Also covered by [The Boston Globe](#), [Metro](#), [Boston Herald](#) and more.

[Reflections on Diversity and Inclusiveness During Challenging Times](#)

The departments of Nursing and Patient Care Services embraced a major goal to co-create an environment at BWH that ensures all employees, patients and families feel welcomed and cared for.

[We Will Never Waver: Community Gathering Brings BWHers Together](#)

The BWH community comes together to support each other and reaffirm what we stand for, after the executive order on immigration, which deeply impacted many members of our community.

[Nabel Reaffirms BWH’s Commitment to Inclusivity](#)

During a Town Meeting, Brigham Health President Betsy Nabel, MD, reaffirms the institution’s values and commitment to diversity and inclusivity.