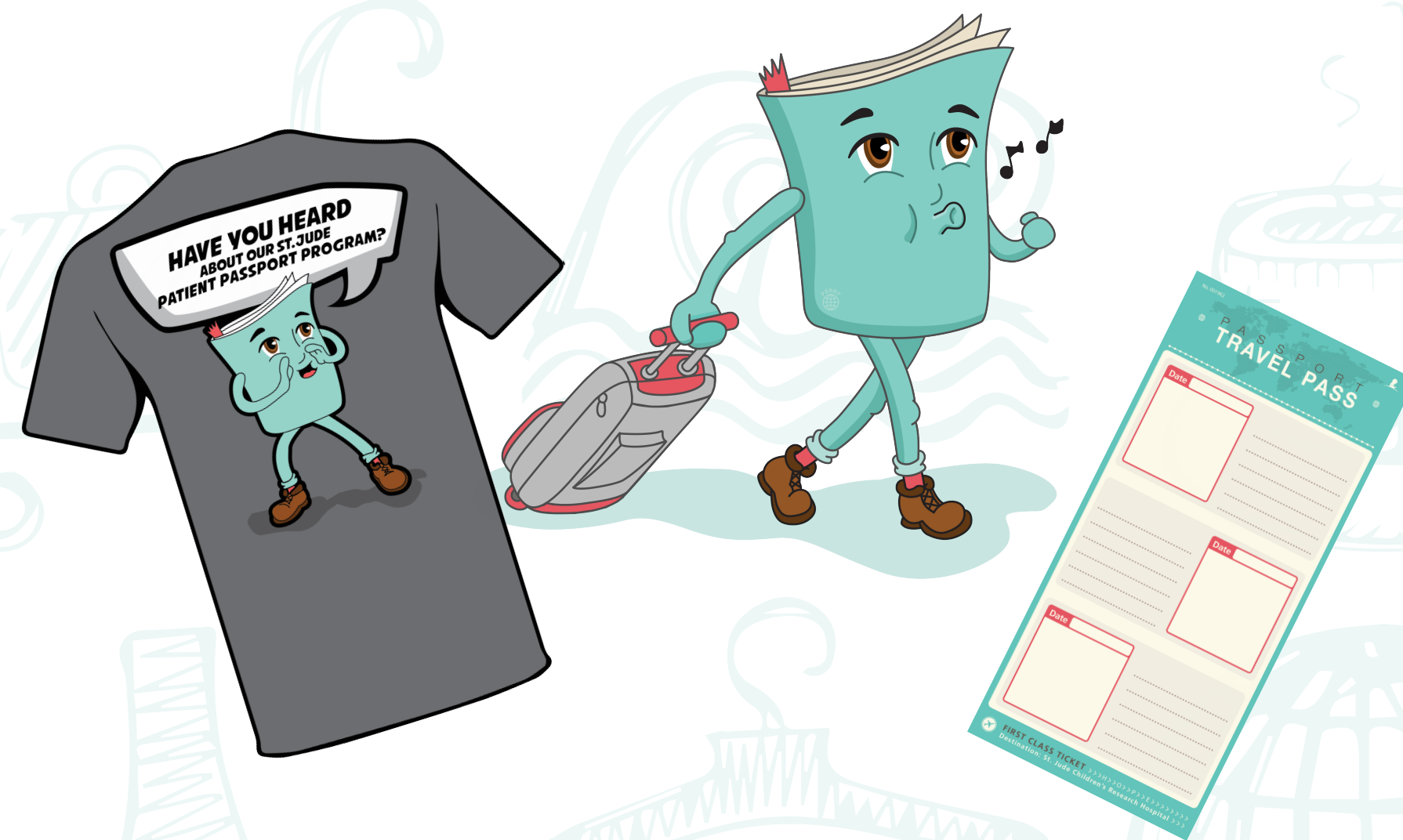


A Culture Change: What's the Reward?

Amanda Brody, MS, CCLS, Ashley Carr, BS, CCLS

Introduction

The St. Jude Patient Passport Program was developed to engage patients on a journey of recognizing and documenting achievements, compliance, positive coping, and completion of difficult tasks throughout their treatment. This program was created to replace a hospital-wide treasure chest program by equipping and encouraging staff to provide positive reinforcement and praise at the end of each healthcare encounter. The St. Jude Patient Passport Program provides each patient an opportunity for ownership and control as they navigate the hospital environment.



Outcomes

Patients, parents, and staff gained an appreciation of the transition from a reward culture to a praise culture as they experienced the positive influence of intrinsic motivation. Anticipated struggles were observed as patients became accustomed to no longer receiving tangible rewards. The opportunity to travel to different hospital areas in search of a stamp to add to the patient's passport served as a memory for their hospital experiences. A decreased focus on tangible rewards began to lessen children's expectations for continued rewards when not at the hospital. Staff took ownership in being part of a culture change that proved beneficial for patients and families.



My Favorite Things

MY FAVORITE SUBJECT IN SCHOOL: _____

MY FAVORITE ANIMAL: _____

MY FAVORITE COLOR: _____

MY FAVORITE PLACE TO EAT: _____

MY FAVORITE THING TO DO WITH MY PARENTS: _____

MY FAVORITE FOOD: _____

MY FAVORITE BOOK: _____

MY FAVORITE MOVIE AND TV SHOW: _____

MY FAVORITE MUSIC OR SONG: _____



Background

In 2015 the Child Life Program identified the need for further research and planning to incorporate changes within the institution to transition from a reward culture to a culture of praise and recognition of accomplishments. According to facets of the self-determination theory, offering rewards can diminish the positive effect that choice has on a child, potentially communicating to them that they are being controlled (Patall, Cooper, & Civey Robinson, 2008). Henderlong and Lepper (2002) expressed concern of the overuse of tangible rewards, specifically because, "if the extrinsic motivator is powerful enough, intrinsic motivation becomes almost irrelevant, or at least very difficult to measure, in the immediate situation" (pg. 775). Verbal praise can shift the focus from extrinsic motivation to intrinsic motivation, potentially negating the need for tangible rewards to encourage patients to cooperate and participate.

Along with support from the literature, the following considerations were identified as motivators for change:

- Budget considerations
- Space restrictions
- Feedback from parents and caregivers regarding patients who participated in the treasure chest program having a difficult time completing everyday tasks at home without receiving a tangible reward.



Lessons Learned and Looking Towards the Future

Creating a culture change is challenging and can be time-consuming. It is important to consider the long-term goals and sustainability of implementing this change not only for the child life team but the multidisciplinary team members as well. The positive impact and support witnessed in the beginning of this culture change was encouraging and an accomplishment to be proud of. The unique opportunity that came with this success is how to maintain momentum and long-term impact hospital-wide. In looking towards the future, a need for consistent and stronger staff buy-in is needed to maintain the impact of this change. Opportunities for patients to share and celebrate their own experiences with the St. Jude Patient Passport Program are key to sustaining this type of culture change and to see long-term use within the institution.

Program Implementation

The need for a multidisciplinary approach to developing and implementing programming to facilitate change grew as the impact of the reward culture was recognized. This team consisted of child life specialists, nurses, schedulers, and physical therapists from various clinics, inpatient units, and ancillary services across the hospital. These representatives served as staff champions in their areas as the St. Jude Patient Passport Program was introduced and implemented with staff, patients, and families.

Stages of Program Development:

- The idea of a system that allowed patients to document their medical journey each day based on medical accomplishments and treatment experiences was suggested at a child life work day
- The need to have multidisciplinary collaboration was identified
- Planning began and sub committees were formed to focus on program development, educational materials, and passport and activity book design
- In collaboration with the graphic arts department, the program mascot, travel pass, passport activity book, advertisements, and education templates were completed.
- The current treasure chest program ended and was removed from clinics and units across the hospital. The St. Jude Patient Passport Program officially launched.

Over the three months following the launch of the patient passport program steps were taken to fully integrate this program into the culture and every day practice of the clinics and inpatient units, as well as for it to become a part of the patient's hospital routine. Staff education was implemented at unit councils, staff meetings, and through email communication, along with a video that was created to educate about the new program. Patients were given the opportunity to learn more when receiving their passport materials at sign up tables around the hospital. Staff in patient care areas were encouraged to wear their patient passport t-shirts, pins, and to provide stamps and opportunities for praise when interacting with patients.

References

- Henderlong, J. & Lepper, M.R. (2002). The effects of praise on children's intrinsic motivation: A review and synthesis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 128(5), 774-795.
- Patall, E.A., Cooper, H., & Civey Robinson, J. (2008). The effects of choice on intrinsic motivation and related outcomes: A meta-analysis of research findings. *Psychological Bulletin*, 134(2), 270-300.

