Patient Appreciation Day in Radiation Oncology

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Patients undergoing radiation therapy struggle with many physical and emotional stressors. Many ways to help patients cope with stressors and improve the treatment experience are found in the literature, including humor, art, entertainment, and hospitality. At H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center, the radiation therapy nurses and staff members use entertainment in an annual patient appreciation day event as one way to give back to the patients.

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Patients in the radiation oncology department, the staff work together to transform the department into a fantasy land, using lighthearted themes, costumes, props, decorations, and treats. The patients and staff enjoy this event, as evidenced by the smiles and laughter throughout the department. Studies show that patients appreciate and use humor as a way to help with stressful situations (Christie & Moore, 2005). Patients also report satisfaction with entertainment being incorporated into the healthcare experience (Ziqi et al., 2013). Entertainment is a big part of the patient appreciation day.

The theme of the most recent event was Radiation Cinemas. The radiation therapy areas in the facility are divided into several zones based on the type of treatment machine. As patients came for treatment, they found the area had been transformed with movie-related themes. For example, the check-in staff dressed in white shirts, red vests, and bow ties and remade their zone into the theater box office. Other staff members followed suit and transformed treatment areas into movie sets. Patients were given movie tickets and popcorn bags loaded with treats. Each zone represented different movies themes, such as 101 Dalmatians, A League of Their Own.

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