

Social Services at Twin Cities Spine Center

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We offer a unique opportunity pre-operatively for providers, patients and family members. Most clinics are providing pre-operative classes for surgical patients. We are adapting to shifting health care needs and improving spine outcomes. By pro-actively assessing the individual patient and their psycho-social needs pre-operatively we are improving the patient experience and better preparing them the acute care stay. We are actively assessing the social determinants of their health and how that affects their recovery.

When the spine pre-op classes were first introduced I sat in on a both the classes at United and the classes at Abbott. What I saw was that there are times when speaking or teaching at someone was ineffective. I saw a woman who was well groomed and appeared to be highly distracted throughout the entire class. She physically appeared to be in distress. After the class I asked her if there was something bothering her and if there was anything I could do to assist. Upon our dialogue it appeared she was supposed to have surgery but she was the main caregiver for her husband who had cancer and emotionally she was struggling to pay attention in class despite the skilled and experienced staff members providing the presentation. I worked with her to set up open arms of Minnesota for his meals and she engaged her extended friends and family with the Senior Linkage Line for care giver support. She was able to start settling and focusing on her own health care journey.

When I went to the one at United I observed something similar. There was a unkempt gentleman in the back row who wasn't paying attention and mostly falling asleep. I asked him after the class what was the most valuable thing he took away from the class that day. Throughout our brief conversation he shared that he wasn't literate and he felt forced to come so he could have surgery. He didn't take much away from the power point presentation because he wasn't able to read it. He liked the videos and felt that was helpful.

The social work role adds to the depth of the comprehensive care necessary for these complex surgeries with a lengthy recovery. It enhances the work the teams are already providing by adding the specialized component of social service. The goal is to provide the



Leslie Weide is an experienced social worker who provides assessment, counseling, discharge planning, financial aid coordination and other assistance to TCSC patients and their families. Leslie may coordinate patient/family conferences to facilitate communication and implementation of treatment recommendations. She can serve as a liaison between patients, relatives, medical and surgical staff, and any applicable outside agencies. She may also assist with social or environmental situations as they relate to patients' medical conditions, hospitalization or rehabilitative care. She spends the majority of her time assisting the physicians and staff members at the Minneapolis clinic location at Abbott Northwestern Hospital.



best possible experience with the most appropriate information that is based on the patient's particular and unique needs. The benefits to the patient are that ideally it improves the discharge process, gives patient's a sense of control by integrating them as a part of the planning process. We are working to shorten length of stay and reduce re-admissions. We are able to assess and connect earlier in the health care journey so that patient and family members are more in control.

Ultimately I enjoy helping patients and family members plan their recovery so that there is less worry.