Benefits of Therapeutic Clowns in Hospitals

The presence of Therapeutic Clowns in a hospital can:

• Convey a compassionate, respectful presence. Their interaction with the patient/family is individual, insightful and age appropriate for the adult or child and situation
• Validate a patient’s humanity by acknowledging their need for consideration and understanding and support.
• Provide a visual re-focus of the patient’s attention. When they see the colorful, gentle, silly clown, it changes their emotional well-being. Frequently a patient’s facial expression shifts when they see a clown before them, validating they have been “touched”
• Transform the emotional atmosphere from serious to playful
• Encourage staff to share their humor and playfulness – reminds team that there is a child within each of us.
• Serve as a complementary team member and “extra eyes and ears” for overtaxed health care workers.
• Persuade patients to cooperate when staff is having problems
• Help a patient cope with individual challenges
• Offer patient distraction play before and during medical treatments thereby dissipating stress and anxiety
• Offer moments of delight and amusement in the hospital environment
• Unite patients, doctors, staff and family in a web of joyful humanity
• Encourage those who feel isolated and alone
• Add a human touch to a highly structured environment
• Empower the patient by giving them control over the playful interaction. Offer complementary therapy that competing hospitals may not have
• Give patients and families the belief that your hospital cares about them, not just their illness

Created by AATH Therapeutic Clown Advisory Board – October 2013