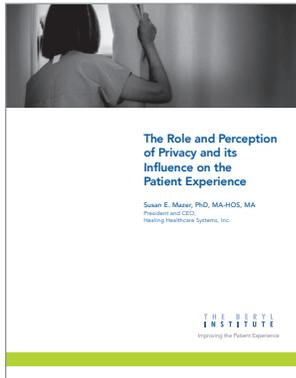


# The Role and Perception of Privacy and its Influence on the Patient Experience



This paper explores the results of a significant study exploring the implications of patient perceptions of privacy and the impact this has on the overall patient experience. Patient privacy has long held a unique place in medical events for families and physicians as codified in the Hippocratic Oath. However, there is a substantial difference between the original oath of confidentiality and current practices.

Conducted by Dr. Susan Mazer, the study reported in this paper provides an opening through which to “see” the perceptions of patients as they reflected on what happened to them when they became involuntarily vulnerable and subject to the control of others; where the typical experience of healthy life shifted in both circumstances and environments and where the awareness of experience, whether conscious or not was heightened. Through careful review of patients’ narratives, 13 emergent categories of description emerged to provide the framework for understanding the patients’ experience of privacy.

The insights discovered move us beyond the limiting constraints of considering privacy simply as a regulation, to better understand what ultimately matters to patients at the bedside as they engage in healthcare and create their own perceptions of experience. It provides practitioners a new lens through which to examine privacy and to explore the impact that can be created in every healthcare encounter.

Aspects of Privacy

WHAT	HOW
Privacy is autonomy, ownership	Privacy is not being subjected to anyone else’s sounds/words/ discussions
Privacy is one’s business	Privacy is being alone/left alone
“My business is my business”	Privacy is hiding secrets, being ashamed of something
Privacy is control over my own body	Privacy is not telling or having to tell anyone anything, not responding or having to respond to anyone
Privacy is a physical place and space	Privacy is being in control of one’s life
Privacy is dangerous	Privacy is not always important/does not always matter
Privacy is personal	
Privacy is lonely	

Figure 1  
(Mazer, 2011, p. 136)

To download the complete paper or access other patient experience resources, visit [www.theberylinstitute.org](http://www.theberylinstitute.org).

## About The Beryl Institute

The Beryl Institute serves as a professional home for stakeholders who recognize that the patient experience is an essential element in the execution and evaluation of healthcare performance. The Institute defines the patient experience as “the sum of all interactions, shaped by an organization’s culture, that influence patient perceptions across the continuum of care.”