

Families are more than visitors. They're partners in care.



FAMILY PRESENCE CONVERSATIONS

TIPS FOR PATIENT, FAMILY, ADVISOR, AND CITIZEN CONVERSATIONS WITH HEALTHCARE PARTNERS

Family is who a patient chooses to have with them for support and comfort during their healthcare experiences.

Family involvement helps make the care experience better and safer. Patients identify who is family and how they want their family to participate in their care and decision-making. "Family Presence" is a philosophy, which may be reflected in policies and in practices that welcome families as partners in care, enabling the person identified as family to be present and included in the health experience. Family Presence does not mean that all family and friends are present at all times.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW PATIENTS, FAMILIES, ADVISORS, AND CITIZENS CAN ENCOURAGE FAMILY PRESENCE



AT THE POINT OF CARE

- Ask healthcare providers to use words that everyone can understand, not medical jargon. Ask that instructions are written down, and meeting materials are sent in advance.
- Request healthcare providers pay attention to concerns expressed by patients and families.
- Encourage practices that will enhance communication between patients, families and healthcare providers such as “NOD” (Name, Occupation, Duties) and “Teach Back” (e.g. “Can you tell me in your own words how you would explain what we’ve talked about, to a friend).

ORGANIZATIONS

- Suggest that healthcare organizations update policies and practices to enable family presence, access, or rooming-in 24/7 (for the support person) versus visiting hours (for guests).
- Ask healthcare providers about practices that increase patient and family participation as partners in care. Some examples are:
 - › [“Shared decision-making”](#) a collaborative process that allows patients and their providers to make healthcare decisions together.
 - › Family sharing the patient's cultural, emotional and spiritual preferences
 - › Family Presence at assessments, or hospital “rounds”, or care planning meetings
 - › The opportunity (not the responsibility) for family to help with routine or comfort care
 - › Staff support and guidelines for families to be present during difficult, painful or invasive procedures, during critical illness, as well as pre-and post-operatively.
- Find out how patients and families are acknowledged and included in conversations about care, safety, quality improvement, service planning as well as system design, research and evaluation.
- Discover the best 'point person' to have these discussions with. It could be a health care provider or manager, a patient representative, a patient/family advisory council, a patient experience department, or quality improvement team.

SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

- Find out about the ways your local healthcare organization listens to patients including the process for concerns or compliments and/or a patient and family advisory committee.
- Learn about other resources from the [Institute for Patient- and Family- Centered Care](#) such as the Family Presence Guide: [Better Together Pocket Guide for Families](#).
- The [Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement](#) has a [full toolkit](#).
- Learn how [Better Together](#) can help you!

The [principles of patient and family centred care](#) (respect, information sharing, participation and collaboration) are the foundation for Family Presence.

These resources have been developed by the organizations below with patients and families across Canada. We hope this will help you to begin the conversation about family presence with your own loved ones and your healthcare providers

Check out national and provincial organizations for patients, families and citizens such as: [IMAGINE \(Citizens Collaborating for Health\)](#), [Patients Canada](#), [Patients for Patient Safety Canada](#), Patients 4 Change ([Pts4Chg](#)).