

Communicating with the Family Caregiver

How to help proactively engage the caregiver while acknowledging the patient's needs, wants, values, and goals for care. Tips are to be followed with respect to patient's HIPPA rights.

- Include caregiver in communication concerning care preferences.
- Include caregiver in shared decision making understanding the caregiver may be a key component to the patient's behavior change.
- Assist in enhanced communication between caregiver and patient's care team.
- Teach essential skills by providing proper training/education for required caregiving duties especially when this may include medical or nursing procedures.
- Use caregiver to help gather patient medical history.
- Ask about caregiver preferred communication method (email, phone call, text, patient portal log-ins)
- Considering patient and caregiver routine/schedule when making care plan.
- Display patience when having to describe any part of navigating the healthcare system.
- Pay attention to caregivers health (physical, mental, and emotional). Encourage caregiver to make sure they are keeping up with their own medical appointments and healthcare.
- Watch and listen for signs of caregiver burnout/stress that may need to be addressed.
- Keep a list of local caregiver support groups.
- Keep a list of community resources that may be of benefit including specialized information such as Alzheimer's Association Caregiver Center or Family Caregiver Alliance that will lead caregiver to other resources.
- Provide Home Safety Checklists (provided in health education material section).

References and Resources:

- [Supporting Family Caregivers in Providing Care](#) Chapter 14- Patient Safety and Quality: An Evidence-Based Handbook for Nurses- Susan C. Reinhard; Barbara Given; Nirvana Huhtala Petlick; Ann Bemis; April 2008
- [Involving and Supporting Family Caregivers in Care Planning and Delivery](#)- Resources for Integrated Care; September 2017