

# Fact Sheet: Patient- and Family-Centred Care

## What is Patient- and Family-Centred Care?

Patient- and family-centred care is an approach to health care that:

- empowers patients and their families and fosters independence
- supports family care-giving and decision-making
- respects patient and families' choices and their values, beliefs and cultural backgrounds
- builds on individual and family strengths
- involves patients and their families in the planning, delivery and evaluation of health care services.

## Ways of practicing patient- and family-centred care

Patient- and family-centred care means working in partnership with children and their families in the delivery of health care. It also means being aware of and responding to the child's and family's needs.

Staff are sometimes not sure what patient- and family-centred care actually looks like. The actions in the list below are examples of patient- and family-centred care and are things that you probably already do in your daily interaction with families. They may be simple, but they're very important in creating an environment that is patient- and family-centred.

- Believing and trusting parents/carers and patients – they are the experts in their child/themselves.
- Introducing yourself each time you walk into the room and explaining what it is you're going to do.
- Listening to patients and families and giving them an opportunity to discuss any of their questions, anxieties or concerns.
- Discussing which aspects of care the patient or family would like to provide, where it is safe to do so. Not every patient or parent/carer will want to contribute to patient care in hospital so this needs to be discussed with each patient/family.
- Giving the family – including the child or young person – clear, timely information. Keeping the family informed of their child's condition and treatment helps alleviate anxiety and also helps them be part of the decision-making.
- Asking the family for their view on the patient's care plan and as appropriate, incorporating their views.
- Making sure the parents/carers and, where appropriate, patients are involved in decisions that are made for care and treatment.
- Accepting and supporting decisions made by families, whenever possible, or explaining why it isn't possible.
- Respecting and promoting the rights and responsibilities of patients, parents and carers.

- Keeping the family up to date on test results, procedures, visits from the doctor and so on.
- Communicating clearly to the family and arranging an interpreter if necessary.
- As far as possible, providing a flexible and individualised service, understanding that the needs of the family may change throughout their hospital stay and also recognising that each family is different.
- Respecting the families' values, wishes, and priorities.
- Knowing about and accepting diversity among families (racial, ethnic, cultural and socioeconomic).
- Considering and being sensitive to the psychosocial needs of the patient and their family.
- Recognising and building on the family's strengths. Helping families identify their strengths and build on their own resources.
- Respecting the family's own style of coping without judging what is right and what is wrong.

### What are the core concepts of Patient- and Family-Centred Care?

The core concepts of patient- and family-centred care<sup>1</sup> are:

- **Dignity and respect.** Staff listen to and respect patient and family perspectives and choices. Patient and family knowledge, values, beliefs and cultural backgrounds are incorporated into the planning and delivery of care.
- **Information sharing.** Staff communicate and share complete, objective and accurate information with patients and families in ways that are supportive and useful. Patients and families receive timely, complete and accurate information in order to effectively participate in care and decision-making.
- **Participation.** Patients and families participate in care and decision making at the level they choose, with the support and encouragement of staff.
- **Collaboration.** Patients, families and staff collaborate in policy and program development, implementation and evaluation, in health care facility design, in professional education, as well as in the delivery of care.

### Why practice patient- and family-centred care?

Patient- and family-centred care acknowledges parents, carers and patients as experts in their lives and in their health. Health care professionals and the people for whom they provide care all have the same goal in mind: the best outcomes for the patient. Patient- and family-centred care means health care professionals work in partnership with parents/carers and patients to achieve this shared goal.

This philosophy of care also acknowledges that every patient and their family is unique and what may work for one family, may not work for another. Without knowing the family's perspective, preferences, values and so on, health care professionals may not be able to provide the necessary level of care for that family in a way that meets their needs.

The child does best within a supportive family and community context and can be affected by the stress experienced by their parents or carers. Staff can help alleviate stress by keeping the family informed of the child's condition and treatment, offering opportunities to discuss

questions and concerns and involving the parents/carers and patients in all parts of the patient's care, from basic care right up to giving medications, changing dressings etc, where it is safe to do so and the patient or family are keen to provide that part of the care.

These are all important components of patient- and family-centred care.

Patient- and family-centred care is the Hospital's adopted philosophy of care as stated in the Hospital's [Consumer Participation policy](#).

### Patient- and family-centred care resources

There are a number of resources available to staff on the topic of consumer participation and patient- and family-centred care.

- The Hospital's [Consumer Participation Policy](#)
- The Hospital's [Consumer Participation Guidelines](#)
- [The Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights](#), published by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality (ACSQ). This was adopted by all the Australian Health Ministers on 22 July, 2008.
- **The Hospital's Rights & Responsibilities Charters.** There are three documents, one for adults (parents, carers & staff), one for teens and one for younger children. The Hospital's Charters comply with those produced by the ACSQ, NSW Health and the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#). They are all available on the [SIU intranet site](#).
- **The Institute for Patient- & Family-Centered Care** is an American organisation that provides leadership and resources on advancing the practice of patient- and family-centred care. For more, check out their website, [www.ipfcc.org](http://www.ipfcc.org).
- **Advancing Effective Communication, Cultural Competence, and Patient- and Family-Centred Care, A Roadmap for Hospitals**, produced by the Joint Commission. The Service Improvement Unit has a copy of this document.

### Articles linking patient- and family-centred care practices with improved clinical outcomes

Charmel, P., and Frampton, S., (2008) *Building the business case for patient-centered care*, Healthcare Financial Management; 62(3):80-85

Stewart, M. et al., (2000) *The impact of patient-centred care on outcomes*, Journal of Family Practice; 49(9):796-804.

Arnetz, J. et al., (2010) *Is patient involvement during hospitalization for acute myocardial infarction associated with post-discharge treatment outcome? An exploratory study*, Health Expectations 13(3):298-311

### References

1. Institute for Family-Centred Care, Frequently Asked Questions, <http://www.ipfcc.org/faq.html>, Date accessed 1/11/2010