# Communication throughout the patient’s stay

|   | **Invitation behaviors:**Invite patients and families to engage | **Supportive behaviors:**Support patients and families as they engage |
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| Include the patient and family as members of the health care team | * **Welcome the patient and family as partners of the health care team. Acknowledge their expertise.**

“We may know more about medicine, but you know more about you and your body. We want you to share what you are feeling and experiencing with us, so that we can provide the best care possible.” | * **React positively when people ask questions, volunteer information, share concerns, or want to take part in treatment decisions.**

**Don’t say:** “Don’t worry. We have done this hundreds of times.”**Say:** “This procedure takes a picture of how your knee looks . It helps us follow your progress. It does have a small amount of radiation but should not hurt you.” |
| Ask about and listen to the patient’s and family’s needs and concerns | * **Use open-ended questions to encourage the patient and family, if present, to share health information.**

“What is going well right now? What problems are you having?”“What has been less than perfect in your care?”“What questions do you have?”* **Try to see the experience through the patient’s and family’s eyes.** Patients may be unfamiliar with procedures and environment , which can lead to questions, concerns, or anxieties.
 | * **Listen to, respect, and act on the observations and values of the patient and family.**

“Thanks for letting us know about that drug allergy, Mrs. Jackson. Let me note it in your record. We’ll find another medication.” * **Help patients and family members articulate their concerns when needed.**

“I see something is bothering you. Please feel free to share it with me. I may be able to help.” |
| Help the patient and family understand the diagnosis, condition, and next steps  | * **Give timely and complete information about the patient’s condition.** Review information with the patient and family at every opportunity.
* **Check that you explained things well by using “teach back.”**

**Don’t say:** “Do you understand?”**Say:** “I want to make sure I explained that clearly. Do you mind repeating what I just said in your own words?” * **Share as much information as they want.** Find out how much they want to know.

“Is there anything else you would like to know? Do you want the overall picture or do you want to get the details?” | * **Speak slowly.**
* **Use plain language.** Use words everyone can understand. Break messages into shorter statements.
* **Invite the patient or family to take notes.**
* **Let patients and families know you will find someone with an answer when you can’t answer a question.** Let them know when to expect the answer.

“I don’t have that information, but I will talk with the pharmacist about it and get back to you or have him come and talk to you by this afternoon.” |