

Care Transition

During this hospital stay, staff took my preferences and those of my family or caregiver into account in deciding what my health care needs would be when I left.

QUESTION DEFINITION

This question measures patients' perceptions of the degree to which physicians, nurses, discharge planners, social workers, etc. took the personal preferences of the patient and family or caregiver into consideration while preparing for the patient to be discharged. When the preferences of patients and family members are taken into consideration, adherence to treatment is more likely. Optimal adherence leads to improved clinical benefit, symptom relief, improvements in quality of life, and reductions in health care expenses.

VOICE OF THE PATIENT

My nurses asked me if I would prefer to do my physical therapy at home or by coming back to the hospital. I am in a lot of pain and doing this at home is best for me.

No one asked my husband about what I needed at home. He takes care of me and he is not in the loop with my doctors and nurses.

IMPROVEMENT SOLUTIONS

Essential Behaviors

- Listen for verbal cues. When patients, family members and caregivers ask questions about anything regarding care after discharge, it is important to listen. These questions may indicate an unmet physical or emotional need that the patient, family member or caregiver has not expressed.
 - Ask open-ended questions to probe for more information in order to solicit patients' needs and preferences. For example, if a patient asks why a test is necessary post-discharge, this may be an indication that the patient doesn't understand the reason for the test, doesn't understand why the test can't be done while in the hospital, fears managing this information on his or her own, etc. In this instance, it would be appropriate to ask the patient things such as, "What details about the test are you unclear about?" or, "Are there other concerns that you have about going home?"
- Build rapport with patients in order to learn more about their personal preferences and concerns.
 - Ask about patients' hobbies, passions, relationships, careers, etc. when appropriate.
 - Discuss current events, sports, the weather and other general topics to encourage the patient to talk with you.
 - Use information you have learned about the patient in discussions about his or her future health care needs. For example, if you learn that a patient enjoys walking his

grandson to school, use the goal of doing that again to give him motivation to complete his rehabilitation exercises.

Processes/Operations

- Actively ask about the preferences of patients, family members and caregivers. Assessment of patients' preferences can be used to individualize the health care provider's approach to a given patient. Therefore, it is crucial to offer patients options available for health care needs after discharge. For example, ask patients, family and caregivers if they'd like appointments to be made by the hospital staff for follow-up care and post-discharge testing, or if they'd prefer to make arrangements themselves. If patients, family members and caregivers ask that hospital staff members make the appointments, offer times and locations that are convenient and practical for the patient.
- Give patients, family and caregivers a discharge-planning checklist. This checklist will encourage patients and their families or caregivers to ask questions and express preferences regarding care after discharge. Include information about follow-up appointments, post-discharge testing, medications, plans of action if problems arise, etc. See the "Patient and Family Discharge Planning Checklist" resource below in the Improvement Portal Resources section.
- Train staff to consider the cultural practices of patients, families and caregivers when planning to send patients home or to another setting of care. Cultural differences can influence beliefs about social interaction, communication styles, end-of-life issues, and views on health and healing. Staff should be trained to ask questions such as, "Do you have any cultural, spiritual or religious needs that we should know about?"

IMPROVEMENT PORTAL RESOURCES (LOGIN REQUIRED)

[Patient and Family Discharge Planning Checklist](#)