



Following is the **Better Together Expanded Guide for Families**. **This PDF file is set up for screen viewing.** The next page of this file shows the front cover, subsequent pages show the inside spreads, and the last page shows the back cover.

You may print this file, but the guide will not be in a booklet format. A professional print or copy shop can print the **Better Together Expanded Guide for Families** in a 5 1/2" x 8 1/2" booklet format by using the PDF file entitled:

IPFCC_Better_Together_Expanded_Family_Print.pdf

There is space on the top of the back cover to place your institution's logo if desired.

You may also order printed **Better Together Expanded Guide for Families** booklets from the Institute for Patient- and Family-Centered Care.





Better Together

Partnering with Families

EXPANDED GUIDE FOR FAMILIES

As a *family member or friend* who has been identified by a patient as a care partner, you are an important member of the health care team, **TOGETHER** with doctors, nurses, and other staff and your loved one or friend, the patient. Participate in that role in ways that are comfortable to both you and the patient—whether you are simply present, or you are participating in care and helping to make decisions. The questions which follow highlight some issues which other family members and care partners have identified as important. Use them as a starting point as you work **TOGETHER** with health care staff. Jot down information as you think of it and share with staff.

Talk about your role with your loved one. Introduce yourself to staff and describe your relationship to the patient and how you'd like to participate in care.

Observe changes (physical, behavioral, emotional) in the patient and report them to health care providers. Ask staff what observations they would like you to routinely share.

Gather helpful information (current medications, medical history, other health care providers, and insurance) and bring it all to the hospital.

Ensure that you're present, if possible, at times when information will be shared and decisions need to be made. Keep your schedule for coming to the hospital manageable. Let staff members know how to reach you and be sure you know whom to contact for information when you're away from the bedside.

Tell staff if you have any concerns about the patient's condition or safety or if you are uncomfortable because "something just doesn't feel right."

Help with decision-making about care and treatment. Be a second set of eyes and ears for the patient. Ask questions and take notes. Encourage your loved one to participate in decision-making to the extent he or she chooses.

Enlist help from staff members with whom you are comfortable so that they can support you and your loved one as you participate in care and decision-making.

Ready yourself for the transition to home or community care. Before you leave the hospital, make sure your questions and those of the patient have been answered. Know what will be needed afterwards (medications, treatment, equipment, follow-up appointments) and what changes in the patient's condition should be reported to health care providers.

Talk about your role . . .

Hospitals like ours recognize that patients define "family" in various ways. Even if you are not biologically or legally related to the patient, he/she has identified you as having a special relationship as a care partner.

- What is your relationship to your loved one, the patient? How long have you known him/her?
- What authority do you have to make decisions for your loved one, if needed (i.e., health care agent or power of attorney)?
- What is your interaction with other family members? Will you be the patient's main spokesperson and how will information be communicated to other family members?
- Before this hospitalization, what medical or health-related activities did you engage in with the patient? What kind of care did you provide?
- What care does your loved one want you to provide in the hospital?

- What care are you comfortable providing (getting beverages and/or food, assisting with getting to the bathroom or walking in the hall, helping with physical therapy, asking questions)?
- Do you know the names and roles of various staff members? Have you had an opportunity to talk to them about how you can work together?

Notes

BETTER TOGETHER

Notes



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