



Following is the **Better Together Pocket Guide for Families**. **This PDF file is set up for screen viewing.** Page two of this file shows the front cover, page three shows the inside of the guide, and page four shows the back cover.

To print out the **Better Together Pocket Guide for Families**, please use the PDF file entitled:
IPFCC_Better_Together_Families_Pocket_Print.pdf
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INSTITUTE FOR PATIENT- AND FAMILY-CENTERED CARE
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Better Together

Partnering with Families

GUIDE FOR FAMILIES

As a *family member or friend* who has been identified by a patient as a care partner, you are an integral member of the health care team, **TOGETHER** with the patient and doctors, nurses, and other staff. Your involvement will ensure better care, safety, and outcomes. You have an important role as spokesperson, advocate, and supporter, especially if your loved one or friend, the patient, is too sick or overwhelmed to “speak up” for him/herself.

Trust your knowledge and insights about your loved one’s values, daily life, and medical history. How you participate will be based on his/her preferences and needs, and will vary from situation to situation. The following suggestions are offered to guide you as you work **TOGETHER** as part of the team.

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.

BETTER TOGETHER

Notes



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