**All Patients Deserve RESPECT**

Fostering an environment for open communication during healthcare appointments may be difficult for patients with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) because of differing communication styles and possibly a patient’s limited understanding of the healthcare setting and their own healthcare needs. This resource provides a few tips you can employ to create a partnership with your patients with IDD and empower them to become more involved in their own healthcare. To remember the tips, just think all patients deserve RESPECT.

**Relax** and interact with patients with a disability no differently than patients without disabilities.
- You may feel uncomfortable around patients with disabilities and that is okay
- Time and practice can help you overcome these feelings

**Explain** what you will be doing before completing an action or procedure.
- Consider using visual aids to help explain procedures
- Ask before touching
- Enlist the help of others who know the patient well when necessary
- Allow a patient to ask you questions

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<tr>
<th>Consider Asking</th>
<th>Do you have any questions about what we will be doing today?</th>
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**Speak** directly to a patient before speaking with family members or direct support staff.
- Ask open ended questions to solicit in-depth responses
- Be an attentive listener and use language that is respectful, age appropriate, and spoken in a normal tone of voice
- Rephrase and simplify medical terminology
- Value and respect patient’s preferred communication methods
  - Such as writing things down, talking mats, finger spelling, facial expressions, vocalizations, gestures, sign language, etc.

**Plan** to have conversations about a patient’s preferences for appointments and follow-up care.
- Who should I speak to during appointments?
- Do you have any preferences for your visit today?
- Is there anything you want me to do differently next time? Do you need help with any tasks?
- Do you need me to write down the date and time of your next appointment or instructions for what to do when you leave today?

**Engage** patients in healthcare related conversations, decisions and plans.
- Offer choices for treatments, medications and follow-up care
- Reconsider what are important to the patient
- Consider asking
  - Is there anything health related you would like to talk about today?
  - Do you have any questions for me?

**Confirm** if legal guardians need to be involved in treatment conversations.
- If a patient has a legal guardian, they may not legally be allowed to make decisions about their health care no matter their age
- Regardless of guardianship status, a patient’s opinion should always be solicited and acknowledged

**Talk** with patients about health priorities and steps necessary for reaching goals.
- Explain the concept of health priorities (i.e. key health issues, concerns and goals)
- Facilitate conversations about how being healthy and daily actions are related to health priorities
- Listen to and address all health concerns regardless of the person’s disability
- Provide patients with information they need to live a healthy life