



# Supporting Patients and/or Family Involved in Adverse Events

Everyone has a role in Patient Safety

## Emotional Support

Patients and families often arrange their own support through their churches, communities, friends and families. It is important that we understand what may be available to them and what other sources of support we might offer.

Having a person whose only responsibility was to regularly contact the patients and families to help support them and understand their questions and needs was invaluable. It is so easy to just forget things or put them aside.

Patients need to have someone to support them through conversations with us. It is our responsibility to encourage them to bring someone with them, and if that isn't possible to provide someone.

We often offer to have our social workers and counselling services available to work with the patients and/or families. When we offer to pay for professional psychological help, they often say 'yes'.

Helping our patients access grief support groups where they can be supported by others with similar experiences can be very helpful.

Sometimes the emotion that patients and families need the most help in overcoming is anger. It can be crippling.

## Practical Support

Patients may need financial support with things like transportation, parking, meals and accommodation as we are working through this with them. We should offer this – they shouldn't have to ask.

One of the most challenging areas for patients can be navigating our complex organization. We need to have someone assigned to help them through the maze – booking tests and appointments, connecting with specialists, learning about their specific needs, and sometimes even being present to help them get there.

## Informational Support

Informational support means helping patients/families find the information that they need in a timely manner to help them understand what has happened.

It is our responsibility to make this as easy for them as we can. We need to avoid delays in providing copies of the medical record, to help achieve an honest understanding about what has happened in their care and what we all need to do now. Someone needs to be responsible to ensure that this happens promptly, so they don't need to ask for this.