

University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics Volunteer Services

Information and Suggestions for Patient Visiting

Thank you for becoming a University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics Volunteer and leader in this hospital. We are glad you have decided to share your time to assist patients, guests and staff here. We know the health care environment can be intimidating so we have compiled a list of suggestions to help you succeed in your contacts with our patients. You may also call the Volunteer Office Monday through Friday, 8AM to 5PM at 356-2515 with questions or concerns.

Suggested Patient and Family Diversions

Wild Rose Gifts in the main lobby offers a variety of items including gifts, jewelry, handbags, clothing, as well as UI Hospitals and Clinics, and Hawkeye merchandise. Sundries like Newspapers, magazines, books, balloons, flowers, cards, stamps envelopes, stationery, toiletries including toothpaste/brushes, cosmetics, shampoo, deodorant, gum, some candy, personal hygiene, razors and shaving cream, disposable cameras, and batteries.

The **Kaleidoscope Gift Shop and Safety Store**, located on level 1 of Stead Family Children's Hospital, is a unique space where you'll find whimsical and educational products selected with kids and families in mind! The shop is open 9AM to 5PM Monday through Friday, and 9AM to Noon on Saturday.

The Patients' Library, 8016 JCP, is open Monday through Saturday 1PM to 4PM. A second library, the **Children's Library**, level 1 UI Stead Family Children's Hospital, is open Monday through Friday 9AM to Noon, and Sunday 1PM to 4PM.

At both libraries you can check out books, magazines, iPads, laptop computers, music, movies, DVD players, video game consoles, video games and even craft kits. A number of printed and online resources are also available to help track down treatment and recovery information for specific diseases and conditions. The libraries also offer patients business/communication services, including scanning to email, fax service, photocopying and printing.

Always carry a copy of the **Discover Flyer**, which lists FAQ's as well as the hours and locations of all eating establishments, parking info., etc.

Patient/volunteer interactions

Key Words at Key Times - How YOU can affect patient satisfaction!

Begin every interaction by giving our patients ANODAT (Acknowledge/Greet, Name, Occupation, Duty/Task, Thanks), e.g. "Hi, my name is _____. I am a volunteer here in the hospital and I'm here to _____. Is there anything else I can do for you? I have the time. Thanks!" **Every patient, every time.** When rounding from room to room, always knock before entering and wait for response, give patient the ANODAT, then:

"Is your call light within reach?"

"Is your phone within reach?"

"Are your tissues close by?"

"Is your bedside table where you would like it?"

"Is there anything else I can do for you today? I have the time."

Opening statements and questions useful on your first encounter with a new patient:

- Be sure to introduce yourself and state that you are a volunteer with the hospital (always wear your hospital ID badge when volunteering), e.g. "Hi, my name is _____. I am a volunteer here in the hospital and I was wondering if there is anything I could help you with"...or "I'm volunteering here today and would like to chat with you for awhile and/or get you anything you might need."
- Ask them how they are doing/how things are going today.
- Ask them if there is anything you can get them from gift shop, newspapers, stamps, puzzles, books, etc (be sure to check with a nurse before giving any food or beverages – even water!).
- Offer to read to them – books, newspaper, the Bible, etc. (Patients' Library Info)
- Offer to do crafty things with them – draw, watercolor, knit, etc.
- Offer to entertain visiting children – bring materials from the Patients' Library.
- Talk about the weather, sports, current news events, etc.
- Check your unit binder to see if anything has been written about a particular patient, this can be an excellent opening for you.

Helpful questions in creating conversations:

- Be observant when entering the room – often times you will be able to pick up on a patient's interests.
- Most patients enjoy talking about their lives – jobs, families, pets, etc.
- Ask where they are from – you will be surprised at how small the world really is.
- If there are pictures in the room, ask about the people/animals in the pictures.
- Comment on any flowers or balloons in the room.
- Ask about their employment or if the patient happens to be retired, where they used to work.
- Ask them about their past travels – you may have some common travel experiences.
- If dealing with **children** – ask what grade they are in, what their favorite subjects are, what they like to do, about their friends, what their favorite TV show is, etc.
- Don't be afraid to talk about yourself some, too, if patients seem interested and ask. Nothing too personal, but patients may enjoy hearing about what year you are in school, what your major is, where you are from, etc.
- Again talk about the weather! This is always safe.

Other suggestions:

- Relax! Enjoy yourself and have a good time – your patients will pick up on your enthusiasm.
- **Smile** and be polite – friendly first impressions go a long way.
- Be sure to speak up, speak clearly and speak slowly.
- Eye contact is important whenever communicating.
- Be an active listener – reciprocate questions when appropriate and **sit at eye level**.
- Many patients enjoy visitors, but if not, don't take it personally.
- Nurses and clerks are also a good source for information on patients – don't be afraid to ask them who might enjoy a visit or if there are any special topics of interest to a patient.
- You may offer your hand but don't insist – watch for cues. A warm, gentle handshake at the start or close of a visit can be reassuring. Most cultures are comfortable with this gesture, but further comfort gestures (hugs, for example) are not appropriate to initiate. Be sure to practice hand hygiene before and after patient contact.

***Thank you for your desire to improve the patient/family experience at our hospital!
– Your friends in Volunteer Services***