

Tips for Patient Visiting *University of Iowa Health Care Volunteer Services*

Thank you for becoming a UI Health Care volunteer and sharing your time to assist our patients, visitors, and staff. The health care environment can be intimidating, so we have compiled a list of suggestions to help you succeed with patient and visitor contacts. Our best advice? ***Be your most outgoing self when you are here!***

Wild Rose Gifts (WRG) – (First Floor, Elevator D, M – F, 7am – 8pm and Saturday & Sunday 10 – 6pm)

A visit to WRG can be a nice diversion for patients and/or families. Located in the main lobby, WRG gifts offers a variety of items, including jewelry, handbags, clothing, Health Care and Hawkeye logo merchandise, balloons, flowers, cards, stationary, toiletries, candy, and books.

Kaleidoscope Gift Shop & Safety Store (First Floor SFCH, M – F, 8am – 4pm)

Kaleidoscope is designed for kids, and those who care for them! The shop offers whimsical and educational products specifically selected for children and families. Traditional safety equipment such as helmets, safety seats, and medical alert bracelets can also be found here.

Patients' Library (8016 JCP, Monday – Saturday, 9:00am – 4:00pm)

Janice and Bruce Ellig Children's Library (First Floor SFCH, M – F, 9am – 4pm and Sunday 1 – 4pm)

Anyone can check out books, magazines, iPads, laptops, computers, music, movies, DVD players, video game consoles with games, and even craft kits, from our libraries! A number of printed and online resources are available regarding treatment and recovery for specific health conditions. The Patients' Library also offers business and communication services such as scanning to email, faxing, photocopying, and printing. In the Children's Library, Story Hour is held every Wednesday at 10:30am and offers fun for kids of all ages in a specifically designed gaming area.

Volunteer – Patient Interactions

Key Words at Key Times – How YOU can affect patient satisfaction

Begin every patient interaction using **AIDET** (**A**cknowledge, **I**ntroduce, **D**uration, **E**xplanation, and **T**hank). E.g.

Acknowledge: “Good morning.”

Introduce: “My name is [Your Name], and I am a volunteer here [in BLANK Unit or at UI Health Care]. I am here to [state the task].

Duration, let the patient know how long the task will be: “This/The [task] should typically take about [duration].”

Explanation, walk the patient through what you will be completing, let them know what to expect next if needed, and how to contact you.: If you need anything, please be sure to use your call button to reach me.”

Thank: “Thank you for letting me [visit, assist, care] for you today!”

Complete AIDET for **Every patient, every time**. Remember, when rounding from room to room knock before entering and wait for a response, then AIDET. Ask if there is anything else you may be assistance of:

- “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:

- Always wear your hospital ID and introduce yourself as a volunteer with the hospital, e.g., “Hi, my name is [Name], a volunteer here. Is there anything I can help you with?” or “I’m volunteering here today and would love to chat or get you something you might need.”
- Ask how they are doing or how things might be going today.
- Ask if there is anything you can get them from gift shop (newspapers, stamps, puzzles, books, etc.). Always check with a nurse before giving any food or beverages – even water.
- Offer to read together or to them – books, newspaper, the Bible, etc. (Use the Patients’ Library Info).
- Offer to do crafts together – draw, watercolor, knit, etc.
- Offer to entertain visiting children – bring materials from the Patients’ Library.
- Discuss the weather, sports, non-political current news events, etc.
- Check your unit binder for notes on the patient – they can be great conversation starters.

Helpful questions in creating conversations:

- Be observant when entering the room – you can often spot clues about the patient’s interests.
- Most patients enjoy talking about their lives – jobs, families, pets, etc.
- Ask where they’re 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 about their past travels – you may have some common travel experiences.
- With ***children***, ask what grade they are in, favorite subjects, their friends, what they like to do, or favorite TV shows, etc.
- If patients seem interested or ask, don’t be afraid to share **a little** about yourself—like your year in school, major, where you are from- while keeping it appropriate and not too personal.
- Talk about the weather – it’s always a safe and easy topic.

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.
- Whenever communication, eye contact is important.
- Be an active listener – reciprocate questions when appropriate and **sit at eye level**.
- Many patients enjoy visitors, but if not, do not take it personally.
- Nurses and clerks are also a good source for information on patients – don’t be afraid to ask if they know who might enjoy a visit or if there are any special topics of interest.
- A warm, gentle handshake at the start or close of a visit can be reassuring. You may offer your hand for a handshake, but don’t insist – watch for cues. Avoid initiating other gestures like hugs- they are not appropriate to initiate. Always practice hand hygiene before and after patient contact.
- Carry a copy of the **Welcome** booklet which lists FAQs & amenities, the hours and locations of all eating establishments, parking information, etc, or visit:

[Your Visit to the Medical Center on University Campus | University of Iowa Health Care \(uihc.org\).](#)

[Your Visit to Medical Center Downtown | University of Iowa Health Care \(uihc.org\)](#)

[Your Child’s Visit | University of Iowa Health Care Stead Family Children’s Hospital \(uihc.org\)](#)

Questions, concerns, or suggestions?

Call the Volunteer Services Office at 319-356-2515 (Monday – Friday, 8:00am – 5:00pm).