



Am I Safe?

SAFETY CONVERSATION GUIDE For Regulated Health Care Providers

Ensuring safe and effective care for your patients will enable them to live safely and independently in their own home. This **SAFE** conversation guide will support you in initiating a two-way conversation with your patients and their caregivers about safety in the home.

- ✓ **SHARE** your risk and safety assessment.
- ✓ **ASK QUESTIONS** to understand your patient's perspectives and how they impact their safety.
- ✓ **FACILITATE** informed decision making through active communication.
- ✓ **EVALUATE** progress and continue conversations about safety in the home.

1. SHARE YOUR ASSESSMENT

Frame your conversation in a positive way – discuss safety not risk. Focus on fact-based information gathered from risk and safety assessments. Share specific examples from your observations.

- TIPS!**
- Ask if the patient would like to have a family member or other person involved in the conversation.
 - Explain that the conversation is about maximizing their safety and independence.
 - Be as straightforward as possible. Speak clearly and avoid medical jargon.
 - Remain open-minded to a patient's right to choose; keep your personal values on safety out of the conversation.

2. ASK QUESTIONS

Help patients and their caregivers become aware of the following safety considerations.

HEALTH STATUS

Medical conditions can impact safety

Patients and their families don't always understand their medical conditions and symptoms and how they impact their safety and well-being.

- How are you managing your condition(s)?
- What are your biggest concerns right now? Is this impacting your safety?
- Have you experienced any changes in memory, mood and physical symptoms?

CARE PLAN

Treatment options may present safety concerns

A patient's safety at home can be affected by unintended side effects from medication, treatment plans and assistive devices.

- Have you started or changed any treatments or medications?
- Are you experiencing any side effects from your medications or treatments?
- Do you have any safety concerns about your treatment or care plan?

LIFESTYLE CHOICES

Behavior and attitudes are linked to safety

Lifestyle choices including tobacco use, alcohol consumption, physical activities, and eating habits all impact a person's safety.

- Are you experiencing any limitations that concern you?
- What are some of the things you do to stay active and healthy?
- Are you interested in learning about your [nutrition need]/[physical activities]?

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

A safe home environment

Have an open discussion on how to make the home safe.

- Is there anything that has been getting in your way of doing things?
- Do you have any safety concerns right now?
- Could anything be changed to make your home safer?

- TIPS!**
- Encourage conversation by using prompts such as nodding, saying “go on” or “I would like to hear more about that.”
 - Expect emotions and acknowledge them with supportive statements, such as “It seems like this conversation is difficult for you. Can you tell me what is making it difficult?”
 - Repeat back what you’ve been told in your own words to ensure a clear understanding.
 - Gauge your patient’s readiness—and willingness to have a safety conversation.

3. FACILITATE INFORMED DECISION MAKING

Make sure your patient has enough information to answer the question “Am I Safe?”

- TIPS!**
- Use the teach-back technique to check for understanding – “To make sure I’ve explained things well, tell me how you understand your situation.”
 - Pose friendly questions: “There are different ways that people can make their life easier and safer at home. Can we spend a few moments talking about what is important to you so that we can plan your care together?”
 - Provide written information about safety concerns and encourage your patient to share with their family members.

4. EVALUATE PROGRESS

Always ask yourself “Is my patient safe?” and “Can my patient be safer?” Safety conversations need to happen often. Provide opportunities to continue the conversation in follow-up appointments or calls.

- TIPS!**
- Document and share your actions and observations in the care plan.
 - Encourage all team members, including patients, to voice their concern if they sense or become aware of a safety risk. Use assertive statements to communicate safety risks outlined by “CUS”:
- I am **C**oncerned
I am **U**ncomfortable
This is a **S**afety Issue