



# Am I Safe?

## SAFETY CONVERSATION GUIDE For Unregulated Health Care Providers

As someone who spends the greatest amount of time with the patient, you are often the first care provider to notice changes in the individual's condition or situation. This **CARE** guide will help you think about patient safety, get to know your patients and families, and share your ideas so you can help them stay safe in their homes.

- ✓ **CAREFULLY OBSERVE** things that may affect your patient's safety.
- ✓ **ASK QUESTIONS** to understand your patient's point of view and get to know them better.
- ✓ **REPORT** what you see and hear to your supervisor or health care team member.
- ✓ **ENCOURAGE** your patient to be safe.

### HEALTH STATUS

Recognize changes in how the client is feeling, acting or thinking

#### **CAREFULLY OBSERVE**

- Behaviours and emotions (mood swings, confusion, memory loss, aggression).
- Physical abilities (mobility, strength, walking, getting out of bed).
- Appearance (odour, pale skin, change in weight, bruises, reddened/itchy areas).
- Communication (changes in ability to speak, hear, or answer questions).

**ASK** how your patient is feeling to learn their thoughts about their health condition—  
How do you feel today?

**REPORT** changes in physical, emotional or mental status.

**ENCOURAGE** your patient to think about what makes them feel better or worse throughout the day.

### CARE PLAN

Be aware of how the services can impact the client's safety

#### **CAREFULLY OBSERVE**

- Medications (refusing/skipping a medication, having difficulty taking it, new medications).
- Patient's care needs and plan (discomfort from therapy, care or treatment, unmet needs).

**ASK** your patient to share their likes and dislikes and how you can help them with care—  
How would you like me to [ ]?

**REPORT** any concerns with your patient's care.

**ENCOURAGE** patient's involvement in their own care.

## LIFESTYLE CHOICES

Lifestyle choices can affect safety

### CAREFULLY OBSERVE

- Signs of possible abuse (unusual scars, multiple or frequent bruises, inappropriate behaviour).
- Risk-taking behaviors (excessive alcohol intake, illegal drugs, smoking).
- Social support (social activities, loneliness).
- Eating and appetite (types, amount and condition of food).

**ASK** if your patient is aware of how their lifestyle choices are impacting their safety—Do you feel safe in your home?

**REPORT** any unusual things or changes in your patient's daily activities.

**ENCOURAGE** your patient to have a safe and healthy lifestyle.

## PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Home environments can pose safety challenges

### CAREFULLY OBSERVE

- Living conditions (clutter in the house, barriers to mobility, lighting, animals).
- Fire and other potential safety hazards (burn marks in carpets, loose carpets).
- Any changes that could impact safety in the home.

**ASK** your patient if they feel safe and comfortable in their home—Is there anything you need to make you safer in your home?

**REPORT** any concerns with your patient's living environment that may put you or them in an unsafe situation.

**ENCOURAGE** your patient to think of ways to make the inside and outside of their home a safer place and to always be mindful of their safety.

## TIPS



- Talking with patients and their caregivers, rather than at them, sets a warm tone and builds trust.
- Observing is not just what you see or hear, but also knowing what is 'normal' for the patient.
- Report only the facts - be precise, accurate and provide details or specific examples:
  - Describe the specific situation or behavior; provide concrete data
  - Explain the safety concerns
  - Seek advice
  - Confirm plan