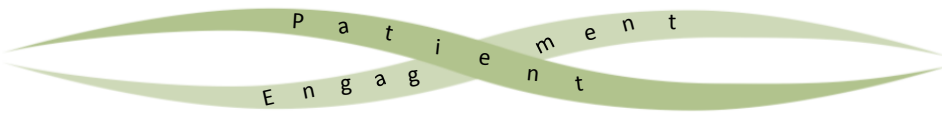


### Being a Patient and Family Advisor

#### Being a Successful Advisor

- Start with yourself, think about how you present yourself, how you come across to others, and strive to be positive.
- Be open-minded, see the big picture, and see beyond yourself.
- Develop new skills.
- Learn about the program or department.
- Be comfortable to partner with and teach other patients, families and staff.
- Assume the best about people and don't judge anyone based on appearances.
- Listen with empathy, ask questions and be honest with your answers.
- Learn to say no if you need to, don't take on more than you can handle, and recognize when you need to take a break.
- Believe that sharing your own or your family member's health experience will help make a difference for others.
- Practice self-care. Seek support if you experience emotional effects from advising others about your healthcare experience.



### Qualities of a Patient or Family Advisor

Those who have experienced care as a patient or family member have unique skills and abilities.

- Share insights and information about their experience so that others can learn from them.
- See beyond their experiences.
- Show concern for additional issues.
- Listen to others well.
- Respect other's perspectives.
- Interact well with people.
- Speak comfortably in groups.
- Work well in partnerships with others.
- Show a positive outlook on life and have a sense of humor.

### Benefits for the Patient and Family

- Improved services for you, your family and others.
- The chance to make meaningful changes.
- Share information with other patients and families.
- Making a contribution feels good.
- Giving back to the system is satisfying.
- Get to know other patients, families and staff.
- Expand your knowledge and skills.
- Gain a clearer understanding of the challenges within the healthcare system.

### Benefits for Alberta Health Services (AHS)

- Improvements in the planning process
- Help carry out the mission of AHS.
- Increases AHS knowledge and skills.
- Helps AHS do its job better.
- Brings a fresh perspective to problems.
- An ally to advocate for better services is provided.
- Increased empathy and understanding of the perspectives of patients and their families.

Adapted from:  
Words of Advice. A Guidebook for Families Serving As Advisors. Institute for Patient and Family Centred Care.  
Thomas, J.& Jeppson, E.S. (1997) Bethesda, MD: IPFCC  
Institute of Patient and Family Centred Care. Selecting, Preparing, and Supporting Patient and Family Advisors in Primary Care