

Patient Companion Training

Role (see Job Description)

To provide a safe environment for the patient who is confused or has dementia and requires observation and supervision to prevent harm to self. Your role is not to provide patient care independently, but you can assist (help) with the care when asked to by the staff.

Dress code

- Follow the registry dress code: Professional attire only. You may be asked to leave facility if dressed unprofessionally.
- No scents, no dangling jewelry, no false nails. Hair must be restrained.
- Nametag will be worn at all times.

General Information

- Always respect the patient's rights.
- No eating at the bedside. You may eat in the break room or cafeterias.
- Ask for breaks if no one has offered. There are two (2) 15-minute breaks and a 1/2 hour meal break. Arrange the time with the staff.
- Do not leave patient unattended—have a staff member cover for you when you leave the room.

Call for help IMMEDIATELY if the patient:

- Attempts harm to self or others
- Displays unanticipated aggressive behavior
- Displays any change in medical condition or mental status
- Report chest pain immediately!!

Reporting

Notify the RN if you observe any of the following:

- Shortness of Breath
- Increased or decreased breathing rate
- Patient complaints of pain
- New cough or an increase in coughing
- Complaints of chills, nausea or vomiting
- Increased thirst
- Changes in skin color
- New drainage from any body orifice
- Urine-color, odor and amount--do not empty urinals or hats

Communication Techniques

- Call the patient by their preferred name.
- Tell the patient what you will be doing before you do it.
- Talk at eye level when possible.
- Use a calm, reassuring voice with the patient.
- Reorientation to time and place
- Distraction--TV, reminiscence, for example, current events, trivia, magazines, cards if available,
- Do not discuss your personal information, argue or give advice
- FOCUS ON THE PATIENT-do not read or watch TV when the patient is awake.
- If the patient is hard of hearing, speak clearly, face the patient, do not yell at the patient.

Safety

- Infection control and codes- (see handouts)
- Eliminate hazards that may cause the patient or you, to trip.
- Use a night-light at night or in the evening.
- Position the call light within the patient's reach.
- Use the call light to get staff attention.
- Position yourself with access to an escape route, maintain distance, and expect the unexpected.
- Do not wear dangling jewelry.
- Do not use perfume or scented after-shave lotions.

Meal Assistance

- Orange (speech therapy) sheet-The staff will feed the patient
- Check the Identification card on tray, assist with tray and food items
- Diet restrictions- NPO, fluid restriction, clear liquid, full liquid, soft, regular, diabetic, renal, are but a few—check with staff before serving the tray, if you are not sure about what the patient can eat.
- Positioning for meals--The patient should be sitting up with back straight, chin neutral, alert, dentures in, glasses on before eating. Allow the patient to feed self if able.
- Cue patient to take small bites and to place food in the center of the mouth.
- Remind the patient to chew and swallow food before taking another bite or drinking. STOP feeding and notify staff if the patient is coughing, choking, swallowing frequently, has a gurgly voice. These are all signs of swallowing difficulties
- Keep the patient in a sitting position for at least 15 minutes after the meal.

Positioning/ Ambulation

- It is very important to reposition the patient at least every two hours.
CALL FOR HELP
- The patient's body should be maintained in good body alignment, in the middle of bed, if possible.
- Keep tubes free and out from under the patient.
- Support extremities with pillows to avoid skin-to-skin contact.
- Remember to use good body mechanics yourself when working with the patient.
- You can offer assistance when the patient transfers—the patient must be able to bear weight.
- Keep the bed in the in lowest position
- When getting the patient out of bed, have the patient Dangle (sit on the side of the bed) for a minute or two first to be sure they are not dizzy or light headed.
- Put non-skid footwear on the patient's feet before getting up.
- Have the patient push off the bed or chair with their hands--do not allow patient to grab your neck.
- Eliminate trip hazards and have good lighting.
- Walk on the patient's weak side with their strong side next to a wall, if possible.
- Do not attempt to catch the patient if falling, gently ease to the floor.
CALL FOR HELP!
- Stay with patient when they are in the bathroom or on the bedside commode.

Grooming

- You may brush the patient's hair.
- If you assist client with teeth brushing, remember to wear gloves. (Place a towel across the patient's chest, hand the toothbrush, etc. to the patient or prepare it with toothpaste, hold the emesis basin under the patient's chin, assist the patient with water to rinse their mouth).
- You may NOT clean dentures.

The Patient Companion is NOT expected to giving nursing care.

You can ASSIST with care giving skills such as: turning the patient, linen change when the staff member asked you for assistance.

Initiated: 06-05

Revised: 02-06 by Elaine Dinsel, GSRMC Professional Development