

A communication tool for Mental Health Carers



ERP... FAB, Thanks!

Establish you are speaking to the correct person and it is convenient to take your call.

Relationship: give your relationship to the patient.

Person(s) for contact (First Contact)
Notify if you are already a Designated or Principal Care Provider.

Focus on the main reasons for your call.

Acquaint yourself with the terminology.

Be Confident: You are the expert in knowing the person you are caring for.

Thank You

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Hunter New England Mental Health Family and Carer Advisory Committee

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ERP... FAB, Thanks!

Establish:
Establish that you are speaking to the correct person (*May I please speak to the most appropriate person involved in the care of John Brown?*) and that it is convenient to take your call. Acknowledge the value of the clinician's time and ensure they are free to talk. (*I appreciate that you are very busy but wondered if you are free to chat briefly at this time...*) It can also be expedient if you try to establish the best time of the day for future calls to take place. (*In future, when is the most convenient time of the day for me to call?*) This lets the clinician know that you plan on being an active and involved carer.

Relationship:
Introduce yourself. Clearly outline who you are and your relationship to the patient. (*This is Bronwyn Brown, John Brown's mother. I believe John is a patient of yours...*)

Person(s) for Contact:
If you are already a Designated or Principal Care Provider, inform the clinician. If not and you are willing to accept the nomination, raise this with the clinician. There may already be another appropriate nomination in place and you may be happy to endorse this nomination. If the nomination is inappropriate, you may like to discuss this with the clinician, clearly and factually giving reasons. Try to stick to facts and avoid use of emotive language. (*I have concerns about this nomination. She is known to the police and I feel she does not have John's best interests at heart.*)

Focus:
You are making this call for a reason. Before calling organise your thoughts in clear, logical order and ensure all the important points of focus are covered. It may help to jot the main points you wish to focus on down on to use as a checklist.

(*The reason for this call is to inform you about the rapid and recent deterioration in John's health over the past month...*) Follow up with a list of symptoms or examples of behaviour that have been of concern, especially focusing on those things that you believe place the patient at risk. (*I believe that John is becoming more paranoid as he is checking locks around the home and I have noticed he is concerned his dinner may have been tampered with.*)

OR

(*We are concerned about John's health and would like to know how he is progressing...*) Follow up with questions regarding possible diagnosis, medications or treatment options being explored.

Acquaint:
It is helpful to acquaint yourself with the terminology. If you do not understand any terms being used by a clinician, always seek clarification. (*I am very keen to learn more about this illness. Could you please explain what you mean by negative symptoms?*)

Be confident:
You have a great deal of expertise. You often know the patient far better than the clinicians who have spent a short time with them. Remember, they are experts in their medical field; you are an expert in understanding your child/ parent/ etc. It is important that you are polite and acknowledge the expertise of the clinician. It is also important that your voice is heard.

Thank You:
When you are satisfied, close with a respectful comment. (*I have appreciated you giving some valuable insights and time today. Is there anything else you wish to ask me? Is there anything else you think it would be valuable for me to know? Thank you once again. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any updates.*)

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