



Background Information, Values and Culture

- We focus on informing families to support their loved ones' care
 - "Family" includes friends or whomever the patient trusts to be their spokesperson during health care
 - We use the term "Care Partner" to refer to the role families play. This differentiates them from professional advocates, including hospital-based advocates
- The Care Partner Project has earned the reputation of being pro-patient as well as pro-provider. We are very careful to refrain from using any terms that carry negative connotations or are associated with blame resting on the health care provider.

It's our policy to avoid using the following terms:

- Medical error
- Mistakes
- Malpractice
- Negligence
- Any other blaming terms, phrases or imagery

Terms to use instead:

- Hospital hazards
- Cracks in care
- System breakdowns
- Stressed and stretched staffs and systems
- Complications/harmful complications in care

Note: Some use 'adverse event' but we discourage that because it is a phrase known mostly to medical professionals. At The Care Partner Project, we strive to use lay terms at the 6th grade literacy level or lower. The easiest way to help you choose such terms is to ask yourself:



- Would an average 6th grader know this term?
 - Does it have more than 2 syllables?
 - Is there a simpler way to say this?
 - Did I pick up this term in medical or nursing school or in college or some sort of advanced education or medical training?
- Avoid negative, blaming language, sarcasm, jokes at provider or payer expense.
 - Avoid complaints about the system or health care in general. For example, on the topic of cost, it's OK to be factual, and even better to share tips you have for cost-savings.

We also avoid using the term “compliant” in describing patient behaviors. Compliance carries connotations of defiance, laziness or some other personal shortcoming when, in fact, patients’ inability to follow through on provider recommendations is often rooted in patients’ having incomplete information, fears and worries, financial concerns and limits (affordability), or some other reservations they can’t express -- or that have not been heard. In this respect, advocates can play an essential role in facilitating patient and provider communication.

Why to we go out of our way to err on the positive side?

Negative energy depletes reserves needed to act pro-actively. Yes, it feels good to vent sometimes, but in the end, such expressions tend to make others feel hopeless, sad, angry or resentful.

Focus on the facts and what we can do to work the system to patient advantage, or work smart in the system – which is what sets professional, independent advocates apart from most patients and families who often feel like “a stranger in a strange land.” Partnering with patient advocates, the feelings we strive to nourish in our Safe & Sound presentation are: informed, empowered, confident and pro-active.

Professional advocates help the patient and her care team...

Keep Calm and Carry On!