

# Communicating well with patients

Health professionals have found the following approaches work well to engage patients so they are partners in their own care.

## Let's talk

PATIENT SAFETY WEEK

### Greet



**Greet patients and their family/whānau.**

*'Kia ora, Shane. My name is Moana Hohepa and I am the senior registrar. I will be looking after you today along with Jane Chambers, your nurse. I would like to ask you a few questions, and answer any questions you may have. Is that ok?'*

### Name



**Ask people their preferred name, and check you have pronounced their name correctly.**

*'Hello, Mrs Alatea. Have I pronounced your name correctly? If I mispronounce it, please tell me. Would you prefer me to call you by your first name or your last name?'*

### Check



**Check you have the right person by asking a few simple questions.**

*'Before I start, I need to check a few things about you. I know it can seem like you are being asked the same things by lots of different people, but we do it deliberately for safety, to make sure we have the right person.'*

### Ask



**Ask if they want anyone else in their family/whānau or an interpreter to be there.**

*'Kia ora, Kiri, the doctor will be here soon to talk about your new diagnosis and how we would like to treat this. We know this can be a confusing time and wondered if you would like any family/whānau to be with you so they can ask questions as well?'*

## What matters?



**Find out what matters most to the patient, or what concerns they have.**

*'Hi, Paul, we have been talking about doing an operation to help your pain and to help you move more easily. You've told me that being able to keep gardening is really important to you. What else is important to you?'*

## Gauge



**Gauge the person's understanding by asking simple questions. Ask them to explain things back, using their own words. Emphasise that the responsibility to explain things in a way they understand is yours.**

*'Hi, Diane, to check if I have explained what is not working so well in your heart, tell me in your own words what you think is wrong.'*

## Simple



**Explain what is going to happen in simple language.**

*'Good afternoon, Mr Smithson. One of the tests we do to see what might be causing your pain means putting a small tube with a camera down your throat to have a look at your stomach.'*

## Explain



**Explain how long test results will take and how results will be notified. If there are likely to be unusually long waiting times, explain why.**

*'We will send your blood test away to the lab. We usually get the results in about [X]. To find out about your results...'*

*'Dr Johnston has been called away to an emergency and will be with you as soon as she can.'*

## Thank



**Thank the person and ask if there is anything else you can do.**

*'I am nearly finished for the day, Bevan, and your nurse for the next shift, Joan, is here to meet you – this is Joan. I've told her about your day so she knows what care you have had. Before I go, is there anything else I can do for you?'*

**For more information** about this and other useful resources to support person-centred care, go to [www.open.hqsc.govt.nz](http://www.open.hqsc.govt.nz).

The Health Quality & Safety Commission would like to thank Counties Manukau Health for permission to use concepts from its A<sup>2</sup>DET tool, which is based on AIDETSM (Acknowledge, Introduce, Duration, Explanation and Thank You), originally developed by the Studer Group in 2005. You can find out more about A<sup>2</sup>DET here: <http://teamcounties.wordpress.com/2012/07/11/understanding-ai2det/>.