



HUDDLE UP

Tips for Engagement

DO:

- Smile.
- Address the patient directly, even if their cognitive capacity is diminished.
- Sit in front of the patient and at the same eye level.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Speak in a pleasant tone, clearly and at a natural pace.
- Help orient the patient by explaining who you are and what you will be doing.
- Gently assist if the patient is having trouble finding the correct word.
- Emphasize that the interaction is not a test but a search for information to help the patient.
- Use simple, direct language.
- Present one question, instruction, or statement at a time.
- Rephrase questions if the patient has trouble understanding.
- Consider using yes/no or multiple-choice formats when asking questions.
- Provide written instructions if the patient can read.
- Involve a care partner when necessary.

AVOID:

- Asking open-ended questions.
- Speaking loudly.
- Showing frustration if the patient cannot recall instructions.
- Allowing distractions during the interaction.

If you notice a change in a patient's behavior, referring them for an evaluation is a good plan of action. Consult the patient's nephrologist to discuss the next steps for screening and treatment.

Cognitive Impairment

Patients with a formal or suspected diagnosis of cognitive impairment may exhibit a variety of symptoms. Behaviors to watch for include memory loss, personality changes, sexually explicit behavior, and difficulties with language, communication, and thinking.

In the dialysis setting, providing care and effectively communicating with the patient can be challenging.

The tips provided on this sheet are designed to support your team and help develop the skills needed to foster successful relationships with patients and their caregivers.

References: National Institute of Health (nia.nih.gov) and The Chicago School (thechicagoschool.edu)