

# How to Be an Empowered Patient

STRATEGIES TO ADVOCATE FOR YOURSELF IN THE HOSPITAL

## 1) INCREASE YOUR HEALTH KNOWLEDGE

Improve your health literacy so that you are able to make knowledgeable decisions in relation to your plan of care. You may not have control over your prognosis or diagnosis, but you do have control over the decisions you make for your health.

## 2) USE THE TEACH BACK METHOD

Summarize and repeat back what the health care professional explained to you in order to ensure comprehension. For example: After your therapist explains how she wants you to stand up from bed. You could say, "okay the way I am understanding what you said is you want me to push up from the bed instead of holding onto the walker when I stand up so I do not fall backwards."

## 3) REQUEST CLARIFICATION AND ASK "WHY?"

Request information on why a healthcare professional is providing you that certain type of care. By understanding the purpose of your plan of care and why you are receiving certain treatments/procedures you can feel more in control of your health and recovery.

## 4) ASSERT YOURSELF IN THE DECISION MAKING

Remember that you are the playmaker of your health and the healthcare professionals are your support team. When you perceive there is something that needs to be addressed in your plan of care, it is important to vocalize it to the medical staff. By asserting your opinions and knowledge into the discussion, you become an active member in the decision making process.

## 5) PRACTICE SELF-CARE

Self-care practices you can engage in while in the hospital include: journaling, praying, crocheting/knitting, mediation, coloring, requesting to speak to a chaplain, implementing breathing techniques, reading a spiritual/religious book, calling a loved one, or sitting in the hospital garden.

**HAVE THE STRENGTH TO LIVE LIFE TO THE FULLEST!**