



You Have the Right to Compassionate Healthcare

Every patient has the right to compassionate care. Compassionate caregivers are sensitive and empathic, demonstrating the following qualities:

- Respect for you and your family
- Ability to understand your needs
- Strong communication, listening, and interpersonal skills
- Ability to impart strength and hope
- Availability, especially in times of crisis
- Ability to think and act creatively

You will improve your chances of receiving compassionate care if you:

View your relationship with caregivers as a partnership in which you are an active participant. The responsibility for good communication falls both on you and your caregiver. Your role is to:

- Come to the visit prepared not only with your questions but also willing to share your concerns. Remember that your caregiver cannot read your mind so be sure to express all your thoughts and worries.
- Tell your caregiver everything you know about your health, medical history, and what you think may have caused your problem.
- Take part in healthcare decisions. Address your concerns, both clinical and non-clinical (quality of life, work life, sex life) up front with as much detail as possible. Let the caregiver know what is important to you.
- Bring a friend or a family member with you if you are worried you will not be understood or if you want support.
- Ask for a qualified language interpreter if you need one.
- Make sure the caregiver is talking in words you can understand and ask for an explanation of any medical terms you do not understand.
- Tell your caregiver about all the healthcare professionals you are seeing, including alternative ones (e.g., chiropractors and acupuncturists) or any remedies traditional to your culture that you are taking.
- Show caregivers you are interested in them. Ask a question about how they are doing.
- Take notes and feel free to ask for written information. Repeat any suggested treatment plan and feel free to ask the caregiver to write down his/her suggestions.
- Ask what you can expect regarding the treatment process (e.g., side effects) and healing process.

The more open you are and the more you understand and participate in your own care, the more likely you will receive compassionate care. If you feel you are not getting the compassionate care you deserve, talk to your caregiver. If the situation does not improve, you may want to consider choosing another caregiver.