

Do You Know What To Do If Someone You Loved One Is In the Hospital?

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**By Tammy Gonzales**

**Do You Know What To Do If Someone You Loved One Is In the Hospital?**

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If someone you know and love is in the hospital there are a few things you need to know especially if you are the Health Care Agent or the surrogate that will be acting and making decisions for the patient.

Keep a notebook and a pen available with you at all times. You will have many things going through your mind that you may need to keep track of and the notebook will be helpful. Much of this information will be exchanged in the days to come with physicians, other family members and friends, and the discharge planner. Family or friends may be asking you questions and offering to do things for you. You do not have to do all of the writing, assign whoever is with you to do some of the writing for you.

Be sure to use the opportunities that family and friends will be offering you now. Select someone you trust who is supportive to be your helper. Let that individual know what it is that you need for them to do. Several others will be offering to help as well, but for the next few days you need a support person. There will be those that offer to do specific things for you, allow them to do those things as long as you trust them. Then, there will be other individuals that will ask if there is anything that they can do for you that is non-specific, if know what these individuals can do for you, go ahead and ask them to do it. Make the most out of this opportunity to allow others to give to you when they offer. (They may not later).

Find out who the discharge planner is and schedule a meeting as soon as possible. Discharge planning is a process and it begins at admission. The discharge planner will help you arrange the care needed for your loved one or friend when it is time for them to go home. They must notify you of their plans before the discharge occurs. The discharge planner can also be your liaison to get needed information from physician and the different specialists who are following your loved one or friend.

Ask the nurse when the physician will be doing his rounds. Most physicians do daily rounds or have rounds assigned. Be there during rounds. Make the most of these daily opportunities. This will be the

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time that you can ask the physician questions and set up a meeting to talk about your loved ones condition, progress, diagnostics, treatments, medication and what may happen in the future.

Contact your insurance company to find out what is covered or not covered in your policy. Get the name of a contact person and their assistant's name for future questions that you will have for them about rehabilitation, home care, nursing home care, etc. If, you have Medicare, the discharge planner or admissions office will be able to help with Medicare coverage while your patient is in the hospital.

You are the advocate now. Do not be afraid to ask questions. Every question you ask and receive answers to will help you make better decisions about the care your loved one will need. No matter what it is that you do not know or understand about the care that your loved one is receiving, ask. Some professionals forget to break down their knowledge in to terms that are easy to understand. Ask them to simplify or use layman's terms.

Take care of yourself. Make sure that you are drinking adequate fluids including water. Be sure to have your regular meals and don't rely on snacks to keep you going. You need rest. Try to take small naps when your loved one is napping even if it is at bedside. Use a Do Not Disturb sign if you need to. Remind others when you need privacy. You may require emotional support. The hospital has a Chaplin and social workers available that can offer you support and counseling.

Take some time to think about how you may or may not be able to care for your loved one. Think about the treatments your loved one is receiving and if the treatment is one that you can learn to do. How will you help your loved one with tasks of activities of daily living? Will you be able to help them walk, transfer, toilet, dress, bath, and eat if that is the help they need? You may not be able to some of these tasks, you may require help, training or maybe a caregiver. You may have to work. Your loved one may require more treatment or rehabilitation to be able to come home. In any case, you should carefully evaluate your circumstances and meet with the discharge planner and let him/her know what help you may need and find out what alternatives are available.

Following are resources links to additional information:

Your Medicare Coverage

National Alliance for Caregiving

RevitaLife Coaching & Consulting provides coaching, consulting, message board, free assessments and free sessions to get you on your way. For additional information please visit RevitaLife on the web at:

**Improve patient sensitivity large multicultural hospital**

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## Do You Know What To Do If Someone You Loved One Is In the Hospital?

### COMPANY/ORGANIZATION

A South Florida hospital. The CEO of the hospital saw the need to provide exceptional customer service to differentiate itself from the competition and avoid being acquired.

### PROBLEM

The hospital was undergoing a series of changes involving personnel, organizational alignment and even an expansion of the property which caused disruption to the entire staff. The attitude of many of the hospital personnel was focusing on the negative aspects of the changes and reflected on reduced sensitivity towards the patients. Some ratings from the Joint Commission were below average and the public opinion about the hospital was poor.

### SOLUTION

Management Resources Inc. (MRI):

Developed a program to meet the hospital's needs based on the input from the CEO, the Assistant VP of Planning and one Department Director

Different programs were developed for different levels in the organization:

an executive program for doctors and administration

a program for the staff

a program for entry level personnel.

The entry level program included customized excerpts of MRI's programs in:

Leadership

Customer Service

Service Recovery

Change Management

Telephone Etiquette

Team Building

Personal Change

This program is delivered in Spanish and occasionally in English

The program was administered to all personnel.

### RESULTS

Personnel who have attended the program show excellent results.

Their attitudes show considerable improvement.

The Joint Commission ratings improved considerably.

The hospital is among the top ten Hispanic businesses and one of eleven (11) hospitals who are still independently owned in Florida.

Managing Partner, Management Resources, Inc

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