

# How to talk to patients about COVID-19 compassionately

## TEAMMATE GUIDE

With the situation rapidly evolving around COVID-19, this is a scary time for our patients. It's important for us to support our patients compassionately during this critical time. Here are some helpful tips about how to speak with our patients.

### 1 Actively listen to patient concerns

**Helpful phrases:** "How are you feeling about all of this? What are your concerns?" OR "What is most important to you during this time? How can we help support you?"



### 2 Show empathy

**Validate patients' emotions:** "It's normal to feel [anxious, scared, stressed, etc.]. This is a time of uncertainty for many people."



### 3 Encourage patient engagement

**Affirm patients' desire to stay safe**

- Patients may ask questions or make comments that seem critical ("What are you doing to keep me safe?")
- Remember, this is a reflection of them caring about their health and safety
- Affirm this, "It's great you're thinking about how to stay safe during this time!"



### 4 Respect their desire to understand

**Share what we are doing to keep them safe**

- "We want to keep you safe through the pandemic, and therefore, here are some things we are doing..."

**Discuss concrete actions they can take**

- "Let's talk about the things you can do to reduce your chance of picking up the infection."

**If you don't know the answer / how to respond, that's okay! Ask the appropriate teammate(s) and share back with the patient**

- "I'll look into that and follow up as soon as possible."



**Take care of yourself!** You may also be feeling scared/concerned/uncertain and that's okay. Be kind to yourself. And remember, you provide critical care that our patients are grateful for every day. Thank you for everything you do to give life!