

Together We're Better

Patient and Family Centred Care in Addiction and Mental Health

Partnering in the Care of your Loved One

You know your loved one in ways that no one else can.

Involving family and other supports is important to people accessing health services. Everyone's viewpoint is important to give the best care possible.

That's why building a partnership between you, your loved one, and health care providers will mean the best care for your loved one.

This brochure was developed in collaboration with families and shares some ideas about ways to build a partnership with health care providers.



What is Patient and Family Centred Care (PFCC)?

Patient and family centred care is a priority for Alberta Health Services.

People accessing the health care system and their families are at the centre of the health care team. PFCC is critical for families seeking help for children, adults or seniors with addiction or mental health needs. When everyone is working together, we can achieve the best care for your loved one.

There are four elements that make up patient and family centred care:

- 1. Treating people with respect and dignity**
- 2. Communication and sharing information**
- 3. Participation**
- 4. Working together as a team**

Your loved one will tell us who “family” is to them. Family can be anyone — a partner, relative, friend, support person, informal caregiver, or a legal guardian. Family involvement and supports may change depending on your loved one’s age or their current ability to do things for themselves.



Families and Caregivers as Partners

When everyone shares what they know and works in a partnership, we can all give the best possible care. Here are some ways you can demonstrate the four elements that make up patient and family centred care:

1. Treating People with Respect and Dignity

- Share information openly.
- Show your appreciation.
- Follow through on what you say you're going to do.
- Let the health team know if you are going to be late.

2. Communication and Sharing Information

- Keep a journal of your loved one's health information. This includes important dates, appointments, what you talked about with your loved one, and what treatments have been tried. There's usually a lot to remember so keeping track of this information helps.
- Tell the health care providers how you would like to share and receive information.
- Share what's important to your family and ask about family supports if you feel you need them.

3. Participation

- You can always be heard. If your loved one decides that they don't want you involved in their immediate care, a health care provider may not be able to share information without their consent. However, you are always able to share your thoughts and the provider can reflect this information in your loved one's care plan.
- Learn how confidentiality rules can affect your involvement.
- Bring a list of questions to ask the health care team.
- Attend your loved one's appointments if possible.

4. Working Together as a Team

- Be open to trusting health care providers.
- Pick a main contact within the family.
- Work with your loved one and health care provider to set priorities and goals.
- Be clear about what your goals are during appointments.
- If you aren't sure about something, ask.

Get Support

Taking care of yourself when you're taking care of a loved one is important.

Make sure to take time for you to recharge and stay healthy.

Ask about supports for you and your family such as talking to peers, support groups or accessing online resources.

Say 'yes' when friends and family offer help.

Information to share with health care providers could include:

- family history
- medical history
- what you've noticed about your loved one's symptoms and behaviours
- recent changes you have seen
- services that your loved one is using or has used
- their strengths and challenges
- care strategies that have or haven't worked
- safety concerns
- medicine they take
- or, a list of the top things the health care provider needs to know about your loved one

**Your voice matters.
Give the team
information about
your loved one,
whether
over the phone,
in-person or
in a letter.**

Look for information from dependable sources like MyHealth.Alberta.ca and organizations that support your loved one's health concern. Ask a health care provider for more information.

Health Care Providers as Partners

When working with a health care provider who practices patient and family centred care, you can expect them to demonstrate the four elements in these ways:

1. Treating People with Respect and Dignity

- Health care providers will:
- Listen and respect your input.
- Show appreciation for your contributions.
- Seek out information about your loved one's and your family's beliefs, values and cultural backgrounds.
- Be on time and come prepared for appointments.
- Show empathy for your family's experience.

2. Communication and Sharing Information

- Health care providers will:
- Always state their name, occupation, and what their role is in your loved one's care.
- Listen to your viewpoint and what you have to say.
- Make sure you understand the information shared.
- Ask how you feel about the information or plan.

3. Participation

- Health care providers will:
- Explain confidentiality agreements and how they affect the type of information that can be shared with you.
- With your loved one's permission, encourage you to come to appointments and share information.
- Involve you in creating the treatment goals and care plan as much as possible.
- Be responsive to your calls or queries.

4. Working Together as a Team

- Health care providers will:
- Give as much information as possible to you without breaking confidentiality rules.
- Initiate conversations between you, your loved one, and the health care team.
- Discuss what support you are able to provide at this time.
- Offer ideas for your consideration.
- Make sure you know who the main health care provider is and how to get in contact with them.
- Offer different ways to communicate and share information.
- When possible, be flexible when scheduling appointments.

Health Care Providers will Offer Support

They will acknowledge your family's experience and your emotions as you witness your loved one's addiction or mental health challenges.

They will encourage you to take care of yourself and the importance of your own health.

They will give you information about resources and support groups.

Health care providers will clearly explain:

- The main health problem
- The purpose of each treatment
- How you can support your loved one
- Why it's important

They will ask for all kinds of information and about what you see as your role in your loved one's care.



Your Voice Matters

Providing Feedback about the Health Care System

Alberta Health Services provides several ways to share your family's feedback.

- **Provide** feedback directly to your loved one's health care providers.
- **Ask** to speak to the service's manager about your experience.
- **Submit** comments through the Alberta Health Services Patient Concerns and Feedback website at albertahealthservices.ca/patientfeedback.asp
- **Volunteer** as an AHS Volunteer Family Advisor. For more information visit albertahealthservices.ca/volunteers.asp



Authored by: Addiction and Mental Health
Calgary Zone
Developed in collaboration with families

Supports for Families

For reliable information about addiction and mental health related services visit:

albertahealthservices.ca/amh/amh.aspx

MyHealth.Alberta.ca

Or call Health Link at 811

For information about services and supports for families in the Calgary Zone, including support groups, call:

Access Mental Health 403-943-1500 or 1-844-943-1500

Examples of addiction and mental health support groups offered to family members in the Calgary Zone include:

Alberta Health Services Adult Addiction Services – Family Support	for addictions
Alberta Health Service Youth Substance Use and Mental Health Services – Family Support	for addictions
Al-Anon Family Groups	for addictions
Alateen	for addictions
Autism Calgary	for autism
Calgary Counselling Centre	for numerous conditions
Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)	for numerous conditions
Catholic Family Services	for numerous conditions
CARYA	for numerous conditions
Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)	for ADD
Children’s Link Society	for children with disabilities
Cool Family Solutions	for numerous conditions
Families Matter	for perinatal mental health
Fresh Start Recovery Centre	for addictions
Organization for Bipolar Affective Disorders (OBAD)	for mood disorders
Schizophrenia Society of Alberta	for schizophrenia
Silver Linings Foundation	for eating disorders

This list of resources is provided to highlight examples of supports available to family members or caregivers and is not intended to imply endorsement by Alberta Health Services, or a contractual or funding relationship with Alberta Health Services.