

Guidelines for Spiritual Care Visitation

By Dr. Dan Osborn

Before the visit

1. Pray!
2. Assess your own spiritual, social, emotional and physical readiness.
3. Put on your name tag if applicable.
4. Gather any needed resources: Bible, devotional, pen, visitation report.
5. Plan, with flexibility, who you will visit and what your goal for the visit is.
6. Wash your hands and check your breath.

During the visit:

1. Knock, greet, introduce yourself and ask permission to visit.
2. Find a place to sit so you can be close and at eye level with the person.
3. Talk about their day or week's activities using open-ended questions.
4. Use your active listening skills.
5. Assess the individual's ability to hear and understand you.
6. Observe objects in the room and build conversations around them.
7. Observe their demeanor to probe their emotional and spiritual well-being.
8. Use spiritual assessment questions formally or informally.
9. Listen more than you talk.
10. Make a mental note of the person's needs.
11. Acknowledge any observable feeling or emotions. Ask the person if your observations are accurate.
12. Prayerfully consider what resources you might have to offer (such as praying together, reading God's Word or singing a hymn).
13. Seek the person's permission when offering a resource.
14. Write a referral, if necessary.
15. Give advanced warning when you need to leave.
16. Leave the room/environment as you found it.
17. Let the person know when you will be back, if possible.

After the visit:

1. Wash your hands.
2. Complete a 'visitation report' if applicable.
3. Follow up with any 'promises' you might have made to the person/family.
4. Give God thanks for the privilege to visit and His grace that enabled you.
5. Practice confidentiality.