This Toolbox Talk is focused on creating discussion about how your team addresses this theme. Below are listed a number of prompts/questions for discussion. Please pick the ones relevant to your service or indeed feel free to develop a more relevant ones if desired. The main thing is to engage with staff around this theme in order to raise awareness and to elicit from them any suggestions with regard to simple actions your service can take to improve the service user experience.

The detail of what the Healthcare Charter says in relation to what service users can expect and what they can do to help in relation to this theme is outlined overleaf.

Questions

1. Do we actively support service users in asking questions about their care?
2. Do we provide service users with information about how they can contribute to the safety and effectiveness of their care?
3. Do we provide continuity of care and smooth transitions for service users from or between services?
4. What mechanisms are in place to make sure that when a service user is referred from one service to another or to a different team all relevant details of his/her health and care plan are forwarded as appropriate?
5. Do we engage with service users in relation to the management and safety of their medications?
6. Do we have a process in place to ensure implementation of identified areas for patient safety improvement?
7. What processes have we engage service users in the prevention and control of healthcare-associated infection?

“We will provide services with competence, skill and care in a safe environment, delivered by trusted professionals for everybody”
What service users can do to help

Patients and family members who are more informed and involved in their healthcare often experience safer and better care and have improved quality of life afterwards. To ensure that you or a member of your family receive the best care possible you should always:
- ask questions;
- talk to your healthcare team;
- listen and note down the information they give.

Medication safety

- Try to follow any advice or treatment that has been agreed with you. If you are worried about doing this, or do not fully understand what is required, discuss it with the person giving the advice or treatment, or contact your GP.
- Take care with medicines. Take any medicine given to you in line with instructions and finish the course of treatment.
- Please discuss with your doctor or pharmacist, before you decide to change or stop your medication, particularly if your prescription says that you should continue to take it.
- Give any out-of-date or unused medicine to your pharmacist to get rid of safely.
- Try to order repeat prescriptions in plenty of time.
- Store medicines safely and out of children’s reach.
- If you go into hospital, let the staff know about any medicines you are already taking, for example by bringing a list of all the medicines and giving this to a member of staff, and tell staff about any allergies that you may have.
- If you feel that your condition has got worse, you should consult your GP, who can, if necessary, consult further with the hospital or relevant service.

Help prevent the spread of infection

- Hand washing is the best way to prevent germs spreading. Wash your hands after coughing/sneezing, after going to the toilet, after touching anything wet (e.g. ooze from your wounds, urine from your catheter, your blood stained dressings) and before mealtimes.
- If you can’t get to a sink to wash your hands, ask your healthcare staff to provide you with a means to clean your hands (e.g. basin of water and soap/wipes/alcohol hand rub) so that you can keep your hands clean.
- Avoid touching any wounds or the area around drips, drains or catheters.
- Ask your doctor or nurse why you have a drip or catheter and how you can help prevent it getting infected. Let staff know if the area around the drip becomes sore or red or if the bandage falls off or looks wet or dirty.
- Understand that taking antibiotics will not help if you are diagnosed with a virus.
- If you have diarrhoea and are on an antibiotic or have recently been on one – let your doctor know.
- If you are given a prescription for antibiotics to take at home, it is very important to take all your antibiotics as prescribed (i.e. finish the course) even if you begin to feel better.
- Do not keep antibiotics at home for future use and do not share them with other people.
- If you think HSE premises are not as clean as they should be, let a member of staff know.
- If you think a staff member has forgotten to hand wash before examining you, give a reminder.
- Hygiene inspection reports for your hospital are available on www.hse.ie.

Support us in the delivery of safe and effective services. If you think that a member of a healthcare team has forgotten to wash their hands, please give them a gentle reminder.

When visiting a patient

- Do not sit on their bed and keep the number of visitors as low as possible at any time.
- Ask ward staff for advice before you bring the patient food or drink.
- Never touch dressings, drips or other equipment around the bed.
- Do not visit another patient in hospital if you have been sick recently, for example sore throat, high temperature, diarrhoea or a cold or flu-like illness.
- Do not take a child to visit someone in hospital if they have been sick recently for example sore throat, high temperature, diarrhoea, vomiting, or if they have a cold or flu like illness.

Acknowledgements