



# PRACTICING INCLUSIVE CARE:

## Tips for healthcare providers and allied healthcare professionals

The practice of Inclusive Care recognizes that many of you are already engaged in many elements of this approach to care. You have invited the Veteran's caregiver into the exam room, you have recognized the healthcare interventions they provide to their Veteran, and you have noted your appreciation for their work and commitment.

A goal for the Campaign for Inclusive Care is to standardize this approach to care across every VA facility in the country with every healthcare professional. As we work to address process and system challenges that range from privacy directives to expanding the EMR to allow for caregiver encounters, there are actions we can take now to implement Inclusive Care. These actions rest on the notion that the Campaign for Inclusive Care is seeking to shift a cultural transformation in the VA and to recognize that the Veteran's caregiver is an asset and ally in care. As with any cultural transformation, it will only be sustained by recognizing implicit and explicit biases against caregivers and working to shift attitudes, knowledge, and behavior among our healthcare providers and caregivers; supported by tools, ongoing education, and ultimately, adjustments to current procedures and policies.

Inclusive Care is informed by patient and family-centered care, the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's Triple Aim, and shared decision-making practices. In reviewing these practices, we took note that despite a great deal of evidence that implementation of these practices increased healthcare provider – patient and family trust, decreased adverse medical events, and improved quality of work and life for the patient, the caregiver, and the healthcare provider, these practices are not the norm. As we set out to design and implement Inclusive Care, we are mindful of the disconnects between these research-based approaches and business as usual.

As a reminder, exclusion of the Veteran's caregiver in clinical treatment decisions disempowers the caregiver – who is providing care outside of the clinic, reduces healthcare provider access to valuable insights of the Veteran's health by the caregiver, and ensures that any encounters between the healthcare provider and caregiver are fraught. The caregiver's ability to trust the healthcare provider, feel confident that their concerns about the patient's health are taken seriously, and see their ideas integrated into the care plan will help the healthcare provider create plans that are more likely to be adhered to in the long-term.

Having understood the "why" of the Campaign for Inclusive Care by participating in the Academy for Inclusive Care and familiarizing yourself with the burdens caregivers experience in their journey as outlined in the Caregiver Journey Map, the Rand Report on Hidden Heroes, and reviewing the Campaigns Quality Improvement efforts, we now share some tips on the "how" of Inclusive Care.

# 10 ITEM CHECKLIST FOR INCLUSIVE CARE

<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Before you enter the room</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review the file with your colleagues</li> <li>2. Familiarize yourself with presenting issues and recent history</li> <li>3. Wash your hands</li> </ol>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Invite the Caregiver into the conversation</b>	<b>Consider:</b> Ask the Veteran if he or she has someone helping them, if they accompanied him or her on the visit and if the caregiver should be invited into the room.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Identify and greet everyone in the room, make introductions by name. Smile and make eye contact.</b>	Identify who you are by name and your role at the facility, acknowledge everyone in the room. If possible, shake hands with others as you learn their names. Confirm again that it is okay with the Veteran and the caregiver to be discussing the Veteran's care today. Ask questions about their day.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Inform everyone in the room of the visit's purpose</b>	Share with everyone what the purpose of today's visit is and what you hope to learn from them about the course of treatment.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Ask Questions Three Questions – for the Caregiver</b>	<p>Throughout your time with the Veteran and the caregiver, pause, make eye contact and ask if anyone has any questions. Ask permission if you are going to take e-notes.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are your fears about your Veteran's condition?</li> <li>2. What would you like to discuss today?</li> <li>3. Reviewing what the care plan has looked like to now, what do you think is best to do now and how can I help with that?</li> </ol>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Learn more about the caregiver</b>	<b>Acknowledge</b> the role the caregiver has taken on and express gratitude.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Conduct your clinical exam</b>	Throughout the exam, explain what you are doing and why. Ensure the patient is comfortable with procedures, as best as possible
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Discuss your findings and next steps</b>	<b>Review the roles</b> and tasks (current and future) is performing and make sure the caregiver is comfortable with these roles. Ask about current tasks they are now performing and if the caregiver has any questions or concerns. <b>Encourage</b> the caregiver to share any barriers to the tasks. Work with the caregiver to identify solutions.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Repeat back next steps</b>	To ensure that the caregiver and the Veteran understand next steps, ask they each to summarize. Hand the Veteran and the caregiver your card. Let them know they can contact you with questions.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Refer, if you have concerns about caregiver capacity</b>	If you have concerns about the caregiver's capacity to manage care outside of the facility. Make a warm referral to the social worker or caregiver support program. Inform the caregiver as to why you are doing this and what they can expect, next.