



Any patient presenting with COVID-19, at all stages of disease, in any care setting.

More on consumer-centred care here

START HERE

Note on terminology

- The COVID-19 Care Working Group use the term "healthcare decision-maker" here to refer to a person who has legal responsibility for making healthcare decisions on behalf of another person. Terminology for this role varies across Australia, including terms such as guardian (Myagedcare.gov.au) or substitute decision-maker (Advance Care Planning Australia) or decision supporter (NDIS.gov.au).
- The term "carers" has been used to refer to persons who provide unpaid care and support to family members and friends (Carers Australia).

## Good Practice Statements:

- 1 Listen, validate and inform**  
Take the time to listen to the patient, validate their experience and offer information about the symptoms that they are experiencing, including management options.
- 2 The big picture**  
Provide appropriate information to the patient, healthcare decision-maker or family/carers about treatment options, associated risks and benefits, fees, charges and possible additional costs.
- 3 Goals of care**  
Ensure early and ongoing collaboration with the patient, their healthcare decision-maker or family/carers as appropriate, around goals of care, which may include active disease-directed care.
- 4 Culture and language**  
Ensure cultural and spiritual/religious practices that are part of the person's wishes are identified, prioritised and observed/facilitated, where possible.
- 5 Guide to settings**  
Determine the most appropriate setting of care, and the transition in or out of a hospital setting.
- 6 Timing is everything**  
The impact of visiting restrictions should be considered when holding care planning discussions to enable patients, healthcare decision-maker and family/carers to share in decision-making.
- 7 Alleviate confusion**  
When healthcare workers are wearing face masks, remember that those with sensory impairments may not be able to hear or use lip reading to assist in understanding.
- 8 Underlying vulnerability**  
Respiratory distress and a diagnosis of COVID-19, or ongoing symptoms following COVID-19, will likely cause increased levels of anxiety and distress. There may be worsening of pre-existing mental health conditions.
- 9 Care and complexity**  
Consider the patient's physical, psychological and emotional complex needs in care and care planning, including patient's complex symptom and functional needs, pain management, personal care and level of assistance required for activities.
- 10 Seek care advice**  
Health care workers should provide care that is within their expertise, knowledge and capabilities, and is the optimal care option for the patient.

## Touchpoints

- ✔ **Shared Decision Making**  
Practise shared decision making when deciding on and communicating the care plan.
- ✔ **Respect Priorities**  
Respect the patient's, healthcare decision-maker's or family/carer's priorities and preferences always.
- ✔ **Inform and Empower**  
Enable and support patients to make informed decisions and manage their own care to the degree of their preference.
- ✔ **Effective Communication**  
Use interpreters, where appropriate, to ensure effective communication with the patient, healthcare decision-maker or family/carers.

Consider:

- clinical features
- the patient's preferences, and where appropriate healthcare decision-maker's or family/carer's preferences
- the context in terms of rural or remote locations,
- public health responses,
- ability to monitor for clinical deterioration and the availability of rapid transfer to higher level of care.

Get Creative

- ✔ Consider the use of written communication tools (e.g., clipboards) in the room, or digital tools if outside the room without face masks (e.g. video tablets, two-way radios).
- ✔ **Supportive of wellbeing**  
Communicate with patients and support their mental wellbeing to help alleviate any anxiety or fear they may have about COVID-19 and post-COVID-19 conditions.

Consider:

- Seek specialist advice or multidisciplinary care arrangements where these would benefit the patient.
- Use of virtual care, including telehealth, should be considered where appropriate.

## Practice Challenges



- ? **Ventilatory support: Short and Long-Term View**  
Decisions around proceeding to more invasive forms of ventilation should be based on discussion, consideration of the patient's expected short and long-term responses to more invasive forms of treatment and an advance care directive or plan if available.



- ? **Appropriate Consideration**  
Where not possible it is essential to communicate this with the patient, healthcare decision-maker or family/carers, as appropriate.

### The key principles of consumer-centred care are:

- Fast access to reliable healthcare advice
- Effective treatment by trusted professionals
- Continuity of care and smooth transitions
- Involvement and support for family and carers
- Clear information, communication & support for self care
- Involvement in decisions and respect for preferences
- Emotional support, empathy and respect
- Attention to physical and environmental needs