

Guideline 6: Emotional & informational needs

Summary

Recognise that family carers may have unmet emotional and information needs

To identify unmet emotional needs:

- Remain alert to signs of distress, including statements, crying, distressed tone
- Ask the family how they are coping.

To identify unmet informational needs:

- Look for cues from the family members, including direct questions and indirect statements
- Ask family carers if they have any questions.

Attempt to meet emotional and informational needs of family carers

To meet emotional needs:

- Listen to the family carer
- Validate their feelings and express empathy
- Offer to refer to appropriate support services e.g. counsellor, psychologist, support groups.

To meet informational needs:

- Attempt to answer the family's questions
- Get the patient's permission before discussing sensitive issues
- Refer the carer to a health professional with the appropriate knowledge/training to answer specific questions.