



Emotional Safety Framework

Emotional safety is the intentional multidisciplinary practice to promote resiliency, healing, and trust for pediatric patients and their families during medical experiences.

<p>Screening and Assessment</p> <p>Goal: Implement a system that identifies patient and family perceptions, experiences, needs, and strengths, and is accessible to all appropriate healthcare staff for the implementation of interventions that prioritize, respect, and protect emotional well-being during the healthcare experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sub-Goal 1: Ensure the appropriate screening and assessment tools are utilized to measure psychosocial risks and strengths. • Sub-Goal 2: Standardize the assessment and screening processes, including the plans for implementing and documenting screener results and providing subsequent care. • Sub-Goal 3: Utilize technology during assessments. 	<p>Intervention</p> <p>Goal: Commit to a child’s comfort and understanding regarding medical encounters. Incorporate best practices grounded in empirical evidence when available in each patient/family encounter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sub-Goal 1: Utilize developmentally appropriate and emotionally safe communication styles and tactics. • Sub-Goal 2: Implement individualized plans based on the developmental and emotional needs of the patient. • Sub-Goal 3: Offer full array of comfort measures for stressful, anxiety provoking or invasive procedures. • Sub-Goal 4: Offer a full array of comfort measures during hospitalization.
<p>Environment</p> <p>Goal: Using evidence-based practice, promote safe and reliable environments that minimize stress and promote emotional safety for patients, families, and staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sub-Goal 1: Create spaces and wayfinding techniques utilizing the expertise of professionals, patients, and families. • Sub-Goal 2: Support health education, healing, and connectedness using physical and virtual environments. • Sub-Goal 3: Create an environmental culture of emotional safety by including patient and family needs into practice, policies, and procedures. • Sub-Goal 4: Create an institutional, environmental culture supporting patient emotional safety congruent with the organizations’ high reliability initiatives, including behaviors, processes, and routines. 	<p>Staff Communication, Education, and Training</p> <p>Goal: Facilitate collaborative relationships and form helpful communication strategies among the interdisciplinary team, the patient, and their support systems. Educate teams about implementation of emotionally safe standards of care, utilize the patient and family voice, and advocate for the patient and family within the boundaries of the hospital environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sub-Goal 1: Staff education and training. • Sub-Goal 2: Establish communication methods to incorporate and standardize the emotional safety process. • Sub-Goal 3: Create internal- and external-facing education and communication.



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Screening and Assessment

Goal: Implement a system that identifies patient and family perceptions, experiences, needs, and strengths, and is accessible to all appropriate healthcare staff for the implementation of interventions that prioritize, respect, and protect emotional well-being during the healthcare experience.

Sub-Goal 1: Ensure the appropriate screening and assessment tools are utilized to measure psychosocial risks and strengths.

Tactics:

- Consider which perspective will be captured with the tool and who will answer the questions
- Decide which risk factors and strengths to target
- Inventory existing psychosocial assessment systems and review for current evidence-based practices
- Utilize a validated assessment tool to capture patient and family strengths and needs that are inclusive of marginalized communities to ensure equitable care for all

Sub-Goal 2: Standardize the assessment and screening processes. Including the plans for implementing and documenting screener results and providing subsequent care.

Tactics:

- Identify which populations to prioritize based on risk level (patient populations, units, diagnoses, family risk, etc.)
- Identify team members who will implement the tools, who/how to document results, and how to disseminate the information to the larger team
- Create a plan for timing of implementation and re-evaluation
- Examine and address institutional barriers to implementing assessment and screening processes

Sub-Goal 3: Utilize technology during assessments.

Tactics:

- Leverage technology to educate and invite parents and children to participate in initial assessments and screeners and to communicate the assessment in the EMR
- Utilize EMR to flag patients who exhibit vulnerability to emotional safety during healthcare experiences
- Utilize electronic records to house questionnaires and capture data
- Build reports to share measurable data



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Intervention

Goal: Commit to a child's comfort and understanding regarding medical encounters. Incorporate best practices grounded in empirical evidence when available in each patient/family encounter.

Sub-Goal 1: Utilize developmentally appropriate and emotionally safe communication styles and tactics.

Tactics:

- Utilize developmentally appropriate language and techniques
- Employ emotionally sensitive communication styles
- Create communication plans incorporating profession and personal supports
- Facilitate developmentally appropriate and emotionally sensitive patient education regarding diagnosis and treatment/care plans
- Incorporate teach back

Sub-Goal 2: Implement individualized plans based on the developmental and emotional needs of the patient.

Tactics:

- Ensure all children and families receive atraumatic care
- Develop treatment, coping and communication plans based on development differences (such as Adaptive Care Plans) to provide equitable care
- Identify and meet individual needs based on age and development, such as the unique needs of adolescents
- Provide trauma-informed care
- Utilize tactics to decrease the creation/enhancement of pediatric medical traumatic stress
- Engage patients and families in the care process

Sub-Goal 3: Offer a full array of comfort measures for stressful, anxiety provoking or invasive procedures.

Tactics:

- Include a variety of pain management options as a standard of care
- Provide supportive measures to decrease anxiety and increase coping
- Promote procedure program/initiatives aimed at managing pain and anxiety



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Sub-Goal 4: Offer a full array of comfort measures during hospitalization.

Tactics:

- Include a variety of pain management options as a standard of care, including non-pharmacological choices
- Develop standardized comfort menu templates that can be adapted for each unit
- Offer choices of comfort, recreational, and therapeutic items
- Incorporate complementary services into care



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Environment

Goal: Using evidence-based practice, promote safe and reliable environments that minimize stress and promote emotional safety for patients, families, and staff.

Sub-Goal 1: Create spaces and wayfinding techniques utilizing the expertise of professionals, patients, and families.

Tactics:

- Leverage research on healthcare environments (wayfinding, color theory, environmental psychology)
- Consider how environmental aspects are perceived differently by marginalized communities
- Involve patients, families, and child life in all aspects of environmental design and seek continuous feedback to maintain quality environments for diverse populations
- Enhance wayfinding to minimize stress in navigating the hospital by using visual cues, technology, etc.

Sub-Goal 2: Support health education, healing, and connectedness using physical and virtual environments.

Tactics:

- Create and advocate for spaces and environments that engage all abilities and situations (play, resource, sensory)
- Implement creative solutions for virtual environments/supports that sustain family and peer involvement and engagement
- Create family/community spaces
- Make resources for patients and families readily available (concierge, family resource center, guest services, etc.)



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Sub-Goal 3: Create an environmental culture of emotional safety by including patient and family needs into practice, policies and procedures.

Tactics:

- Ensure all policies related to the physical environment support family involvement (visiting hours, meal availability, etc.)
- Implement safety practices that promote feelings of emotional safety and family-centered care
- Establish policies related to emotionally safe culture and family involvement
- Include language options and standards into policies and procedures
- Incorporate emotional safety interventions/processes into policies and practice, including standards for medical procedures and appointments, needs, and supports during hospitalizations, and communication considerations
- Implement emotional safety time outs
- Create policies and practices regarding expectations for physical space use, including treatment rooms and play spaces

Sub-Goal 4: Create an institutional, environmental culture supporting patient emotional safety congruent with the organizations' high reliability initiatives, including behaviors, processes, and routines.

Tactics:

- Incorporate emotional safety tactics into high reliability initiatives
- Explore and utilize evidence-based change-related techniques and theories when introducing new emotional safety initiatives
- Incorporate emotional harm moments into daily huddles, safety calls, and rounding
- Develop a reporting mechanism for complaints and grievances around emotional safety, including disparities in care addressing emotional safety
- Build outcome metrics for specific emotional safety interventions
- Develop solutions for reported incidents (family conference, multidisciplinary meeting, root cause analysis, specialty service consultation)
- Develop "Speak Up" practices and programs



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Staff Communication, Education, & Training

Goal: Facilitate collaborative relationships and form helpful communication strategies among the interdisciplinary team, the patient, and their support systems. Educate teams about implementation of emotionally safe standards of care, utilize the patient and family voice, and advocate for the patient and family within the boundaries of the hospital environment.

Sub-Goal 1: Staff education and training.

Tactics:

- Partner with school programs for healthcare providers to ensure emotional safety information is taught in the early career stages
- Incorporate emotional safety trainings into onboarding programs
- Provide ongoing learning opportunities and competencies
- Utilize evidence-based teaching theories and practices to guidance educational practices for healthcare providers and staff
- Educate all staff in the medical environment on pediatric-specific developmental and psychosocial needs, including special circumstances requiring extra care
- Train effective techniques for respectful, developmentally appropriate, and emotionally sensitive care and communication
- Educate healthcare professionals on effective tools and techniques for pain and anxiety management
- Include health disparities in ongoing conversations and implement plans to address them
- Provide trainings on explicit and implicit bias and their contribution to health disparities
- Encourage exploration of bias

Sub-Goal 2: Establish communication methods to incorporate and standardize the emotional safety process.

Tactics:

- Establish a norm of including emotional safety stories into healthcare professionals' conversations and practices
- Include emotional safety components into planning checklists for medical procedures, impactful conversations, and care planning
- Add emotional safety tactics/suggestions to best-practice alerts
- Utilize a variety of methods to establish a patient experience baseline (methods could include questionnaires, scores, phone calls, advisory councils, and other means to capture diverse perspectives)



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Sub-Goal 3: Create internal- and external-facing education and communication.

Tactics:

- Educate the patients and families on their rights regarding receiving emotionally safe medical care within the organization
- Inform the public about the organizational commitment to providing emotionally safe medical care