

Respecting Patients' Privacy: LRCP Symptom Screening

The LRCP environment can be a challenging one to ensure the privacy of our patients when completing their symptom screening survey. Understandably, many patients are not comfortable discussing their health with strangers or in front of a crowd of people. Patients may feel uncomfortable just having someone standing close by while filling in the questionnaire.

Cancer can be very overwhelming for patients and their caregivers, and you may feel as though you want to ease some stress or anxiety by helping with the questionnaires. Even if the intention is to make things easier for a patient by helping, that patient may feel very uncomfortable and might not know how to tell you that. Therefore, you may have breached that patient's privacy even if they have not told you so.

Here are a few steps you can take to make sure patients know that their privacy is respected:

- Ask the patient if they have completed the assessment before and if they would like assistance today.
 - If no assistance is requested, let them know you are there if they would like any help and stand away to the side (once they have begun the survey) to provide them with privacy.
 - If assistance is requested, take their guidance regarding level of support for walking them through the survey (swiping health card, showing rating scale and definitions at bottom of screen). Do not read questions out loud unless they ask you to and do not repeat their responses as others may hear.
- Remind patients that there are various kiosk locations (some are more private) and there are special privacy screens on each kiosk monitor so others standing behind them are not able to see the questions or their responses on the screen.
- Encourage patients to direct questions to their health care provider.
- If a patient is uncomfortable or unsure about answering the questions, tell them they can complete the symptom screening in the clinic appointment.
- If a printer is available, please remind patients to pick up their printed copy of their survey report from the printers and bring it with them to their appointment. Check to ensure it is their initials on the top of the page.

Thank you for respecting patients' privacy. If you are unsure how to handle specific situations with respect to privacy, please call the LRCP Operations Manager, ext 55259.