

# Caregiving in Partnership With Fraser Health

Your role as an essential care partner within the care team

*This resource offers key tips and supports to help you work confidently with the care team and take care of yourself too.*

## Being an Essential Care Partner

An essential care partner is someone—usually a family member or close friend—who knows what matters most to the person they are supporting. Here are some key things to know about being an essential care partner:

- You may hear or use several other terms to describe an essential care partner, such as caregiver or support person.
- An essential care partner is different from a substitute decision maker, who makes healthcare decisions when a person cannot speak for themselves.
- Essential care partners are involved in care decisions, while visitors offer social connection and companionship but are not involved in care.
- Essential care partners are welcome 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, in Fraser Health locations. They can also support from a distance when needed.
- Fraser Health's commitment to person-centred care includes recognizing essential care partners as members of the care team.

To identify yourself as an essential care partner, speak with a healthcare provider, who will share that information with the rest of the care team. You can identify one or more people as essential care partners.

## Sample Introduction

"I am my mom's essential care partner. She wants me to be with her when healthcare providers share important information so I can help her make decisions. I will also be involved in helping plan her next steps. Please let me know how I can help with her care or if you need anything from me."

## Communicating With the Care Team

A strong care team, which includes essential care partners, communicates openly, listens respectfully, and makes decisions together. Here are some ways to communicate effectively:

- Introduce yourself and your role clearly to all healthcare providers.
- Share helpful details about your relationship with the person and their routines or preferences.
- Let the team know if you have power of attorney or other decision-making authority.
- If more than one person is an essential care partner, decide who will be the main contact for updates.

If challenges arise, start by speaking with staff. If the issue isn't resolved, contact a staff leader, then the Patient Care Quality Office at

**1-877-880-8823**  
**pcqoffice@fraserhealth.ca**

## The Importance of Good Communication

Good communication is the foundation of a strong partnership. Honest, respectful communication builds trust and mutual understanding with both the person you are supporting and the care team. But good communication takes time, effort, and a willingness to work through differences together. By practicing these skills, you will become more confident and effective over time.



**Asking for help is an important part of good communication. It shows your willingness to work together while ensuring the best care for the person you support.**

## Getting Support

Supporting someone through their health journey can be rewarding but also demanding. Taking care of yourself helps you continue to care for others. Here's where you can find caregiver support and reliable information:

- Call the **Caregiver Support Line** at Family Caregivers of BC (FCBC) for information, emotional support, or help finding local services.
- Visit the **FCBC Caregiver Learning Centre** for articles, webinars, and videos that can help you feel more confident in your role.
- Access **Fraser Health's resources** for essential care partners on their website.

**FCBC Caregiver Support Line**

**1-877-520-3267**

**FCBC Caregiver Learning Centre**

**www.familycaregiversbc.ca**

**Fraser Health**

**www.fraserhealth.ca/patients-and-visitors/patient-experience**