

Respecting Patients' Privacy

Verspeeten Family Cancer Centre Symptom Screening

The Verspeeten Family Cancer Centre environment can be a challenging one to ensure the privacy of our patients when completing their symptom screening assessment. 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 assessment.

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 assessments. 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.
 - It is important to be mindful that patients may feel uncomfortable having anyone close by while filling in the assessment. If no assistance is requested, let them know you are there if they would like any help and stand to the side (once they have begun the assessment).
 - If assistance is requested, take their guidance regarding level of support for walking them through the assessment (swiping or entering their health card information, showing rating scale and definitions at bottom of kiosk screen, iPad or smart phone). Avoid situations of reading questions or responses out loud.
- Remind patients that there are various kiosk locations by each clinic (some are more private) and there are privacy screens on each kiosk monitor to ensure no one around can view the responses. Screens can be adjusted to enhance privacy as needed.
- Patients have the option to complete the screening on their own device, either at home prior to their appointment, in the waiting room, or using an iPad provided by Verspeeten Family Cancer Centre staff or volunteers.
- 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.

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