

# Supporting people with disability

## A hospitalisation document for clinicians

People with disability have a higher risk of poorer hospital experiences and health outcomes. This checklist has been designed to help clinicians understand how they can best support people with disability in receiving and accessing healthcare.

### COVID-19 can present particular risks for people with disability if they have:

- difficulty practicing hand hygiene
- difficulty performing social distancing because they may need assistance from others, be unable to gauge distancing requirements, or live in residential settings such as group homes
- the need to touch objects or others, or be touched by others to perform everyday activities
- difficulty understanding information or managing change
- co-existing health conditions, and/or complex comorbidities.
- anxiety (or fear) around attending hospitals & health care services for face to face care
- communication difficulties that are more pronounced by universal mask wearing if lipreaders, or absence of tactile methods.

### Ways you can help me – a checklist from a person with disability

#### Communication

- Talk directly to me, not my carer or family member
- Make the time to listen to me
- Ask about my communication preferences e.g. book an interpreter if I want one
- Listen to me – make the time.
- Know what's normal for me and what isn't normal for me e.g. what I might do when I'm in pain
- Find out what helps me to stay calm and what may cause me stress/distress especially in the environment around me
- Make sure I know who I can talk to if I have a problem

#### Information and decision-making

- Assume that I can consent, unless informed otherwise
- Include me in decision-making, with support if I need
- Check whether I have understood any information given to me
- Use Easy Read material where possible

#### Support networks

- Identify whether my family and carers are a critical part of my support, and acknowledge them
- Identify a key contact person with my input and consent
- Assist me to access a support person if I need one
- Provide me and my key contact person with information and support about me as things change.

#### Discharging me from hospital

- Make sure I understand and agree to the discharge plan
- Ensure the supports I need are in place before you discharge me
- Ensure I have a discharge summary and that my key supports have a copy if I consent to it
- Provide a handover to my GP, other relevant health supports and disability service provider where appropriate
- Ensure my supporters and I know what to do if I need emergency help.
- Make sure my discharge medication instructions are in an accessible to me format.

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