

About ReLATE|ReSPOND

The Health Quality Council of Alberta (HQCA) has worked with Alberta Health Services to bring the successful communications skills training program R.E.L.A.T.E. – R.E.S.P.O.N.D.^{® 2001} to health care provider organizations in Alberta. This program was originally developed in Edmonton based on what patients/clients and families reported they want from their caregivers. It gives health care providers strategies for establishing rapport with patients/clients, and respecting the patient/client and family's perspective and experience of health care when providing information. The underlying premise of ReLATE|ReSPOND is that staff who use these strategies and tools to ReLATE to their patients/clients will be less likely to have to ReSPOND to complaints later.

To establish positive relationships with patients/clients, staff are encouraged to **R.E.L.A.T.E.:**

- R** Respect the dignity and privacy of the patient/client
- E** Explain who you are and what you are going to do
- L** Listen to what the patient/client/family is really saying
- A** Ask questions to clarify
- T** Try to be flexible and offer alternatives
- E** Empathize with the stress that accompanies illness

If a complaint is received, rather than reacting defensively, staff are encouraged to **R.E.S.P.O.N.D.:**

- R** Recognize the complainant's perspective
- E** Establish rapport with complainant
- S** Single out the complainant's real issue
- P** Provide information to the complainant about what you are going to do
- O** Operationalize the intended plan of action
- N** Notify the complainant about progress towards resolving the complaint
- D** Discuss the circumstances of the complaint with a supervisor and Document according to organizational policies

The **ReLATE|ReSPOND package** includes a Tool Kit to help with planning a program, a sample pocket card and a CD containing:

Posters: Three 8.5" X 11" posters (black & white or colour). Two posters explain the ReLATE|ReSPOND acronyms and a third can be used to announce upcoming in-service training. Posters can be hung in staff rooms or added to communication books/binders.

Handouts/discussion guides: Six handouts, varying in length from one to four pages, cover strategies for establishing positive relationships, dealing with angry people and complaints, examining personal attitudes and recent experiences, discussing patient/client needs, and tools for coping with stress.

Slides with speaker notes: Two slide presentations complete with speaker notes review the key concepts and skills behind the ReLATE|ReSPOND acronyms. They can be used for group presentations or added to an organization's Intranet for staff to review independently.

Pocket cards: These 2.75" X 4.25" cards have a diecut opening that allows them to be hung on a lanyard and are a useful reminder of the ReLATE|ReSPOND concepts. They can be ordered from the HQCA.

The ReLATE|ReSPOND Tool Kit is available in an *Acute Care* version, which uses *patient* language and a *Community* version, which uses *client* language. The Tool Kits suggest ways to adapt the materials for a variety of situations and include ideas for customizing presentations. Presenters are encouraged to develop specific scenarios to stimulate discussion and use personal stories and humour where appropriate. To make the presentation more engaging, presenters are invited to ask participants to share their experiences and discuss actual positive commendations or negative complaints.

