

How to Improve Patient Experience while wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Connecting with patients while wearing PPE is not easy!

You and the patient may feel anxious & uncomfortable. This can make it hard to communicate well and connect.

Tips to help improve the experience:

Introduce

Introduce yourself and your role at each visit. We all look the same in PPE! Consider personalizing your scrubs or ID badge.

Body Language

Sit at eye level. Smile! It will show up in your eyes even if your mouth is covered. Use gestures like pointing to help communicate.

Share

Share information in short, easy to understand chunks. PPE can muffle your voice. Try to:

- Speak louder and slower
- Pronounce words clearly

Listen

Pause to listen. Listening is a powerful form of communication.

Confirm

Check patient identifying information (PPID). Confirm your patient hears and understands. Use “teach-back” to check.

Acknowledge

Acknowledge feelings of fear or discomfort. Notice these feelings and then communicate them to your patient.

Contact [UHN Patient Engagement](#) for more support.

Remember to:

Use Resources

Use pictures, calendars and handouts to help patients understand. Offer different ways for patients to communicate like pointing. Book an interpreter for patients with low English proficiency.

Consider the Environment

Try to find a quiet, private space. Reduce background noise. Think about time of day and how tired your patient is. These impact their ability to communicate.