



IMPROVING THE EXPERIENCE:

What is CARD for health-care providers

The **CARD system (Comfort, Ask, Relax, Distract)** is a protocol for planning and performing medical procedures that improves the experiences of patients, families and health-care providers. Each letter category (C-A-R-D) includes evidence-based activities that health-care provider, patients and families can use to reduce fear, pain and other stress-related responses (e.g., dizziness, fainting). Health-care providers can find guidance on how to set up and prepare their clinic and how to interact with patients. There are resources for patients and families as well. CARD can be adapted for any clinic setting. To learn more about CARD, go to CardSystem.ca

Comfort

- Provide information about CARD to patients ahead of time so they know what to expect and how to cope. Tailor the information to your patient's needs.
- Create comfortable spaces for patients during their procedures (e.g., private procedure spaces, seating for a support person).



Ask

- People are anxious when they do not have enough information. Encourage patients to ask questions so they are informed and prepared for their procedure.
- Invite patients to select their preferred coping strategies during their procedure and support their choices.



Relax

- Stay calm and be positive. Your actions and words can influence your patients' reactions. If you are calm and use your normal voice, your patients will feel that everything is OK.
- Reduce visual and auditory fear cues. For example, hide needles and obscure equipment, and minimize excessive noise and activity.



Distract

- Provide physical and visual distraction items for patients that want to be distracted. These can be placed in waiting and procedure areas.
- Use CARD posters and other items and activities (e.g., fidget toys, puzzles, CARD game).

