



IMPROVING THE EXPERIENCE:

Words and actions to use

Scan for more resources



The words and actions of others can influence how children experience medical procedures. Some behaviours can promote coping while others can increase distress. Learn ways to play your cards to promote coping during medical procedures. For more information, visit [CardSystem.ca](https://www.cardsystem.ca).

BE CALM

Foster a calm environment and be positive. If you are calm and use your normal voice, others will pick up on this and feel that everything is going to be OK.

Try saying this

“Let’s work together to make your experience as comfortable as possible.” (promotes calmness)

Instead of this

“There are so many people here today and I don’t have a lot of time! Let’s just get it done quickly.” (makes others nervous)

PROVIDE INFORMATION

Provide information about why the procedure is needed, what will happen and what they can do to cope. Tailor the amount of information provided as some people want more information and others want less.

Try saying this

“You are getting the procedure to keep you healthy and safe. What do you want to know about?” (provides tailored information)

Instead of this

“It’s just something you have to do. Let’s get it done. Don’t bug anyone with questions as there’s a line-up.” (doesn’t allow the child to ask for information)

BE POSITIVE

Focus on helpful things and on things that are going well. Use praise to recognize the efforts someone is making as this can help them to remember their experience in a positive way.

Try saying this

“Do you want to talk about what went well and what CARDS (coping strategies) you played? Then you can review them and be reminded for next time.” (positive focus)

Instead of this

“I am so glad that’s over. It was awful. I’m not looking forward to the next time.” (negative focus)

INVITE PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE

Ask about past experiences and preferences for coping. Make sure to offer choices that are reasonable. Let people know you are there to support them. Do not impose coping strategies.

Try saying this

“What CARDS (coping strategies) would you like to play to help you with your procedure today?” (invites participation)

Instead of this

“You will be okay; there is nothing to ‘worry about.’ (vague reassurances, does not invite participation)

USE NEUTRAL LANGUAGE

Words that are perceived as threatening can increase fear. Do not use words that elicit fear and do not use repetitive reassurance.

Try saying this

“You are having a procedure today.” (neutral language)

“What do you want to be doing during the procedure?” (addresses concerns)

Instead of this

“You are getting a needle jab today.” (fear-inducing language)

“You’ll be fine...it’s ok...it’s just a bit longer.” (repeated reassurance)

ANSWER QUESTIONS

Acknowledge concerns and provide balanced information. Do not minimize or dismiss people’s concerns.

Try saying this

“Some people say it feels like a pinch or pushing and others say they don’t feel much of anything. Let me know how it feels for you afterward.” (answers questions, provides balanced information)

Instead of this

“This is going to hurt.” OR “This hurts me more than it hurts you.” (fear-inducing language, false suggestion/dishonest)

“This won’t hurt.” (negative focus, false suggestion/dishonest)



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