



November 2017

VISITING VIGNETTES

A monthly newsletter to all Mended Hearts members.

Fredonia B. Williams, Ed.D.
Mended Hearts National Visiting Chair

**The theme for National Family Caregivers Month is
 "Caregiving Around the Clock".**



Thank you to all of the caregivers who work around the clock to keep us heart healthy doing all of the things it takes to ensure that we enjoy a better life. The focus of this **Visiting Vignettes** is to provide tips for accredited visitors when they visit caregivers and tips for the caregiver.

Tips on Visiting Caregivers

Mended Hearts Visiting Protocol provides the following guidelines on whom accredited visitors visit.

- Patients with heart disease and caregivers.

Who can visit?

- Must be a heart patient. Caregivers may visit family members. A caregiver accredited visitor should be accompanied by an accredited visitor who is a heart patient. A caregiver may be a spouse of a patient, family member, partner of patient or a person responsible for the patient.

The caregiver is a major factor in the recovery, whether that patient has had heart surgery, heart attack or cardiac disease. As an accredited visitor, you may meet the caregiver while visiting with the patient in his room or while visiting with the family in the surgery or cath lab waiting room. Express your interest in the patient's well-being and inquire about his or her concerns.

LISTEN CAREFULLY!

Remember that each patient is unique; so is the caregiver. The caregiver is usually frightened by the responsibility of caring for a heart patient. As an accredited visitor who has heart disease, you can draw on your experience and discuss the concerns your caregiver had in caring for you as you answer the caregiver's questions.

Most importantly for accredited visitor teams, as a caregiver and an accredited visitor of Mended Hearts, you have knowledge of all of the concerns you had, so that you can easily share the following tips with the new caregiver.



1. Encourage the caregiver to speak with the hospital dietitian in charge of the patient's diet if there are questions about diet or specific foods.
2. Encourage the caregiver to speak with the doctor about the patient's physical abilities and recommended exercise program if they have questions about physical
3. Encourage the caregiver to speak with the doctor about the patient's physical abilities and recommended exercise program if they have questions about physical abilities.
4. Recommend the caregiver call the patient's doctor for advice on any questions about the patient's welfare. The doctor is working FOR the patient and wants to be kept informed of any possible problems.

Tips on being a Caregiver

When you are caring for a loved one, whether in the hospital or at home, caring for yourself is often your last priority. However, it is important to create a balance between caring for others and yourself. You may not feel that caring for yourself is a priority, but it is imperative that you try. The best gift you can give your loved one is to also care for yourself.

For the Caregiver- Remember to:

- C**ommunicate how you are feeling
- A**llow time to grieve the lack of normal routine
- R**eflect on the journey-in writing
- E**ducate yourself about the disease
- G**et involved in your loved one's care
- I**nvolve others who can help
- V**isit with other MHI/MLH members
- E**at right
- R**est-get sleep and take breaks

Mended Hearts recognizes the unique needs of caregivers and are committed to providing them with support and education. Mended Hearts hosts a Caregiver Committee whose mission is to provide educational and emotional support to our local chapters. You can join a local chapter by calling 1-888-HEART99. If you are looking for support outside of joining a local chapter, you can create a journal and ask questions via our Connections in a Heartbeat discussion board.



We are thankful for our Mended Hearts Accredited Visitors who continue to provide hope and encouragement to heart patients and their families. We are also grateful for our caregivers who make our lives easier every day.

Heartfelt Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Fredonia B. Williams".

Dr. Fredonia B. Williams
National Visiting Chair
Southern Regional Director



Future Questions/Topics

We want to hear from you!

Other challenging questions for this newsletter may be emailed to fredoniabw@att.net.



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