



## **TIPS FOR HOW TO BE AN EFFECTIVE PATIENT OR FAMILY ADVISOR: A BEGINNING LIST**

- ▼ Believe that your investment in your own health experiences or your family members' will help you in making a difference for others.
- ▼ Develop good communication skills.
- ▼ Listen with empathy.
- ▼ Be honest.
- ▼ Be available.
- ▼ Ask questions.
- ▼ Be open-minded.
- ▼ Avoid assumptions. Don't judge someone based on appearance.
- ▼ Learn to be comfortable with staff and other patients and families.
- ▼ Educate other patients and families.
- ▼ Be willing to partner with other patients and family members.
- ▼ Learn negotiating skills. Be a team player.
- ▼ Think about the points you want to make.
- ▼ Adapt to different situations.
- ▼ Take responsibility for learning.
- ▼ Give input based on your own experience but be able to step out of your individual perspective. Do not deal with personal issues in advisory activities.
- ▼ Tell your own story or be clear if it is someone else's experience.

- ▼ When talking about an experience that did not go well, don't just complain – offer suggestions on how it could have been made better.
- ▼ Think carefully about the words you use. Anger is not productive. If you want to tell a story that brings up strong emotions, ask a peer to help develop your story.
- ▼ When speaking to a group, thank them for asking for your input.
- ▼ Support staff.
- ▼ Be willing to partner with staff.
- ▼ Honor commitments—when you say you are going to do something—follow through.
- ▼ Take risks.
- ▼ Have faith. Expect the best.
- ▼ Stick to it.
- ▼ Ask for help or support from other advisors when you need it. Do the same for others.
- ▼ If you find that you are having difficulty balancing your personal and family life with advisory activities, take a break or give up some responsibilities.

Source: Patient and family advisors and health care professionals attending various Institute seminars.