Having a Patient Safety Conversation

Having a two-way conversation about patient safety is helpful after a serious incident, and should be done without fear of reprisal. Then everyone involved can work together to listen and to actually learn what has taken place.

Instead of imposing a set of recommendations, get involved immediately and look at what happened, plan together and actively change the situation to prevent it happening again. If we provide support to those involved and share what learning we have, then perhaps we will gain understanding into what is actually happening when harm occurs and what needs to change.

Good patient safety conversations…

1. **Break down barriers** – if you can get everyone talking on a level, the impact will be far greater. In planned sessions, invite a handful of staff members to share prepared stories for others to reflect on and respond to, as they shine a light on common experience and enable people to relate to each other.

2. **Make people feel safe** – Confidentiality, facilitation, clear communication before during and after planned conversations make people feel more comfortable and confident to share honestly and openly.

3. **Provide time to reflect** – listening, observing and sharing are the facets of good conversation. Planned conversations offer staff members valuable time to reflect on the personal experience of providing healthcare, building an understanding and compassion for colleagues’ experiences too.

4. **Spread** – if people feel comfortable and confident talking in a planned context, they are more likely to take that confidence away with them, speaking up and sharing in their daily roles. It’s this spread of good conversations that can inform and shape an open, transparent culture which in turn keeps people safer.

5. These can also happen within a safety huddle or safety brief.

For more information about patient safety conversations contact Lisa Pinkney, Patient Safety Manager, 771 2860.