



Care and Kindness Charter

Southern NSW Local Health District

August 2021

Building a workplace of kindness

Why do we need a Care and Kindness Charter?

- Kindness is a quality that we value highly in our District. There is a significant body of research which acknowledges that kindness, trust and respect are fundamental in building a positive workplace culture in an organisation.
- Kindness matters in healthcare, as there is a direct relationship between staff wellbeing and patient wellbeing. Evidence clearly shows that where empathetic communication and compassion are prevalent, clinical teams are more effective, staff morale is higher, patient complaints are fewer and patient quality and safety is improved.

What is a Care and Kindness Charter?

A Care and Kindness Charter is a statement by our organisation that makes an explicit commitment to providing kindness and compassion in every interaction with patients, carers, families and our work colleagues. We ask all staff to commit to this Charter, to bring it to life in all their daily interactions with colleagues, patients and their families.

How was our Care and Kindness Charter developed?

In 2020, we started the conversation about the development of our SNSWLHD Care and Kindness Charter by asking staff and consumers *'What does care and kindness in healthcare mean to you?'* We received dozens of replies from across the District which outlined our staff's views and feelings about the importance of care and kindness in our organisation. We pulled this information together and consulted with our senior leaders in June 2021 to finalise our Charter.

How will we use our Care and Kindness Charter?

This Care and Kindness Charter empowers every person, at every level, to champion the importance of care and kindness in all our daily interactions. It sets a clear commitment relating to human experience for individuals and teams at every level of the organisation. We will build a program of activities across our District that brings to life our commitment to building a workplace of kindness.



SNSWLHD Care and Kindness Charter

At Southern NSW Local Health District, we are committed to providing care and kindness in every interaction with patients, carers, families and our work colleagues. We understand that the commitment to kindness starts with us being kind to ourselves and looking after our own wellbeing so that we can care for others. From that foundation we commit to:

Consistently providing person centred care by:

- Encouraging and involving patients in conversations and decisions about their care
- Supporting and involving families and loved ones
- Taking a genuine interest in the well-being of patients and colleagues
- Being available, and listening attentively, to show our patients and colleagues that we value them
- Asking patients for feedback about their experience so we can improve

Showing kindness and respect every day by:

- Being empathetic, approachable, gentle and patient
- Smiling and openly communicating with people
- Respecting the different cultural backgrounds and experiences of patients and colleagues.
- Maintaining your privacy and dignity
- Providing access to support, including Pastoral Care
- Saying good morning, good night and thank you

Advocating for our patients by:

- Speaking up and taking respectful action on your behalf when needed
- Providing honest answers to questions I am asked
- Treating all consumers and staff as individuals and working to reduce stigma and negative bias
- Delivering on commitments we make to patients and colleagues
- Supporting our colleagues in challenging situations
- Treating others as if they were a member of my own family or community

Demonstrating accountability and integrity by:

- Being a role model for care and kindness through our words and actions
- Never walking past care that is unacceptable – ‘the standard I walk past is the standard I accept’
- Respectfully addressing all instances where others are not contributing to a culture of care and kindness
- Supporting others to have the courage to call out poor behaviour
- Actively promoting a culture of caring and kindness in our teams

Care and Kindness Charter - Implementation Strategy

- Leadership and Governance
 - Establish governance to oversee the implementation of the NSW Health Elevating the Human Experience - Guide to Action, including Care and Kindness initiatives, through Patient Safety and Quality Committee and Health Care Quality Committee
 - Establish a Care and Kindness Working Party to establish strategies to bring the Charter to life
 - Champion and develop 'kind and compassionate leadership' through staff stories, kindness awards, skill development and role modelling
- Potential Strategies
 - Promote World Kindness Day activities
 - Promote Patient Experience Week activities
 - Annual Care and Kindness Award
 - Share personal stories that exemplify our values at key events
 - Promote regular discussions our team meetings about care and kindness
 - Participate in NSW Health compassionate leadership programs when offered



Kindness in Healthcare

There are many resources available to help promote discussion and inspire your teams. They are a wonderful resource for starting meaningful conversations. Here are just a few:

- Video – Dr Chris Turner - [When rudeness in teams turns deadly](#) – emergency medicine consultant Chris Turner discusses research and describes real-life experiences where rudeness between staff impacts outcomes
- Video – [NSW Health - Small Acts of Kindness](#) –
- Video – [Empathy: The Human Connection to Patient Care](#) – Cleveland Clinic
- Video – [Kindness Works at Bass Coast Health](#) –
- Video – [Elizabeth Broderick – Upgrade to kindness](#) - The most effective leaders communicate with authenticity and shared vulnerability.
- Article – [Kindness: an underrated currency](#) – BMJ 2019:367 - an editorial discussing recent research into the transformative power of kindness in healthcare
- Article – [For the sake of doctors and patients, we must fix hospital culture](#) – the bmj opinion – July 12 2019

Gathering of Kindness website - <https://www.gatheringofkindness.org/>