



Your Voice @ the Royal

A consumer newsletter from Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital

October 2018

Metro North Hospital and Health Service *Putting people first*



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A message from Fiona

October is Health Literacy month. It is the month to educate patients/families and carers on health issues and medical conditions.

At Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital (RBWH) health literacy is a key focus and I will explain what this term means and why health literacy is a very important part of managing your healthcare.

Health literacy is the ability to obtain, read, understand, and use healthcare information in order to make appropriate health decisions and follow instructions for treatment.

All consumers of healthcare are encouraged to be proactive and improve their knowledge and understanding of their health. Health literacy is:

- general knowledge about staying well
- being able to understand and act on information about your health
- having more detailed information about your health conditions
- what to do manage your health both at home and in hospital.

Enjoy!

Regards,
Fiona

Why is Health Literacy important?

There is plenty of research and evidence that being informed and partnering with your doctor or allied health professional to make decisions about your treatment and care is better for your health.

So, while you don't have to be an expert, asking questions and understanding the consequences of different options including lifestyle choices is important to get the best out of your treatment and your health.

YOU KNOW YOURSELF THE BEST

Doctors do know a great deal about health and diseases, and they study for many years in their chosen specialty. However, they usually do not know you personally and may not know what is most important to you.

Always be willing to ask some questions and talk about the situation that exists for you.

For example, you might have specific issues impacting on your health and wellbeing such as your lifestyle, preferences and culture. No two people will be the same.

While doctors and clinicians might know best about health, the story is incomplete without your shared understanding of what will work best in your specific case.

Health Literacy improves your health

The Australian Commission for Safety and Quality in Healthcare publish a number of ideas and resources to help you improve your health literacy. Practical advice is available on their website at www.safetyandquality.gov.au.

HERE ARE SOME TIPS THEY RECOMMEND

1. Ask questions to understand more about your health treatment and options.
2. Find good quality health information or ask your clinician where to source reliable information.
3. Understand the risks and benefits of tests, treatments and procedures.
4. Confirm what will happen before and after any procedure or operation.
5. Speak up if you feel concerned or feel that you are not improving as expected.



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Compassion Café opens again

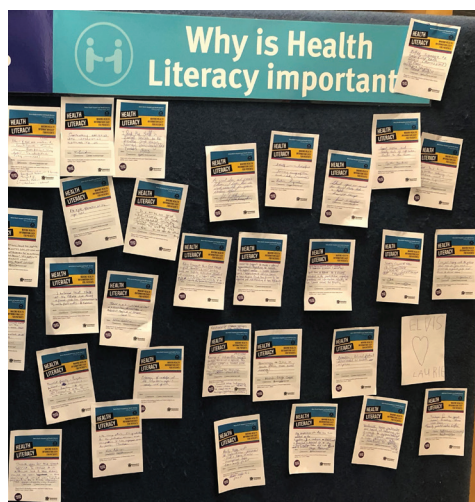


The Compassion Café opened its doors again in October offering patients, their family and visitors a free cup of coffee and a cupcake - and most importantly a chat.

As October is health literacy month the focus of those chats was to learn what people know about health literacy. To find out what the Royal is doing well and what can be done better in order to improve people's experience at the Royal.

Good Health literacy means people are more likely to attend important medical tests, understand and live with their personal conditions more successfully and be required to attend emergency less often.

Those who came to the café were asked to think about what health literacy means to them and why they think it is important. As you can see in the photos, there was a great response.



RBWH website

The new and improved RBWH website is a great source of information about the hospital and its services. It includes important information about parking and public transport, maps of the facility, how to prepare for your appointment or stay, and descriptions about the different clinics and services available.



Visit www.metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/rbwh/ for more information



Get familiar

- **Hygiene** - Maintaining health and preventing disease, especially through cleanliness.
- **Geriatric** - Relating to old people, especially with regard to their health care.
- **Dermatology** - Dermatology is the branch of medicine dealing with the skin, nails, hair and its diseases.
- **Medical Diagnosis** - Identifying a persons health condition.
- **Prescribe** - to say what medical treatment someone should have.
- **Antihistamine** - Medication given to treat allergies.
- **Ventilator** - A machine designed to support a person to breath.
- **Contusion** - bruise.
- **Diagnosis** - identifying a health condition.
- **Chronic** - long lasting, slow to change.

INTRODUCING JANELLE

Janelle Colquhoun is a consumer representative and valued member of the RBWH's, Consumer Advisory Group since 2016.

She has attended many hospitals due to her ongoing health concerns and as a result has become a passionate health consumer advocate and lobbyist. Janelle has been on 23 non-profit and government committees and was a Health Stream delegate at the 2020 Summit in Canberra.

Janelle is an accomplished opera performer, writer and international traveller. She is an award-winning writer and professional speaker, and has spoken and sung around Australia, Paris, Bermuda, Seoul, Chicago, Montreal, Switzerland, Dubai, London, Auckland, Berlin, New Delhi, Singapore and Kathmandu.

In her spare time Janelle runs an entertainment and production agency specialising in professional artists with disability and has produced over 1400 events.

Janelle has lived with Type 1 diabetes since age 10, and at age 29 she went blind. She subsequently experienced further complications from diabetes including neuropathy (nerve damage), stomach cancer, chronic renal failure including three years of home dialysis before receiving a pancreas kidney transplant at the Westmead Hospital in 2008. Since then she's added heart attack, fractures, carpal tunnel and chronic and antibiotic-resistant infections to her long list of health issues and treatments at the RBWH.



"I've only survived this long because I always stay positive and refuse to let anything stops me from enjoying life. I'm also health literate and ask many questions and educate myself on every new illness and treatment and medication. I know my health better than anyone else, as I want be the in control," says Janelle.

We asked Janelle what is one thing she would like others to know about being health literate and living with diabetes.

Janelle says "I want people to understand just how insidious diabetes is - I had tens of thousands of laser shots, 28 eye operations and six months in hospital before I finally went blind. Most of the population don't care if they're obese or have diabetes because complications are something someone else gets in the future, not now."

Healthcare choices you may have to make while in hospital

Everyone's needs and experiences when going to hospital will be different. The goal of the healthcare team is to provide the best treatment possible to ensure the patient can go home better than when they came in.

However, sometimes a patient can be seriously ill or may be facing the possibility of dying.

In these circumstances, the patient, family or carer will be asked to make some very important decisions about whether they would like or not like the patient to receive lifesaving medical interventions.

ACUTE RESUSCITATION PLAN (ARP)

An Acute Resuscitation Plan (ARP) is a medical order prepared together with the patient, family and/or carer and signed by the most senior doctor available.

It replaces the previously known Not for Resuscitation (NFR) orders. It is a plan that provides instructions to a healthcare team of the patient's wishes in the event the patient's health worsens and the need for life saving medical intervention is required.

It is NOT a legal document like the Advanced Health Directive (AHD) – however, if completed properly, it will assist health professionals in situations where urgent decisions need to be made and where there is little information on the patient and understanding of their wishes. It was designed as a short form to be located at the front of a patient's medical records/charts and easily found in case of an emergency. An ARP does NOT replace an Advanced Health Directive.

WHERE CAN I FIND THIS ARP DOCUMENT AND HOW DO I LEARN MORE?

OVERVIEW: this link provides a detailed overview on ARPs

USING AN ARP: this link provides more detail on how an ARP is used

ARP FORM: this is a direct link to the ARP form that you can print out and give to your Doctor to discuss with you and complete

CONSENT: this link provides more information on what an ARP can and cannot enforce, but also provides you with other options to ensure your wishes are considered

WHO CAN OR SHOULD HAVE AN ARP?

Anyone can and should have an Acute Resuscitation Plan. It is advised for patients with a serious illness (where it is expected that they may sooner rather than later suffer from an emergency) to complete one. It is also recommended that a person who is in completely good health to consider having one, if only to ensure that their wishes are considered first and foremost in these circumstances.

Queensland Health. (2017). *Queensland Health Acute Resuscitation Plan (ARP)*. Retrieved from <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/clinical-practice/guidelines-procedures/patient-safety/end-of-life/resuscitation/overview>

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Your Voice @ the Royal provides information about what's happening across the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, including new initiatives, staff profiles, patient stories and details of upcoming events. Contributions for articles are appreciated. Please send them to the RBWH_CE@health.qld.gov.au



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