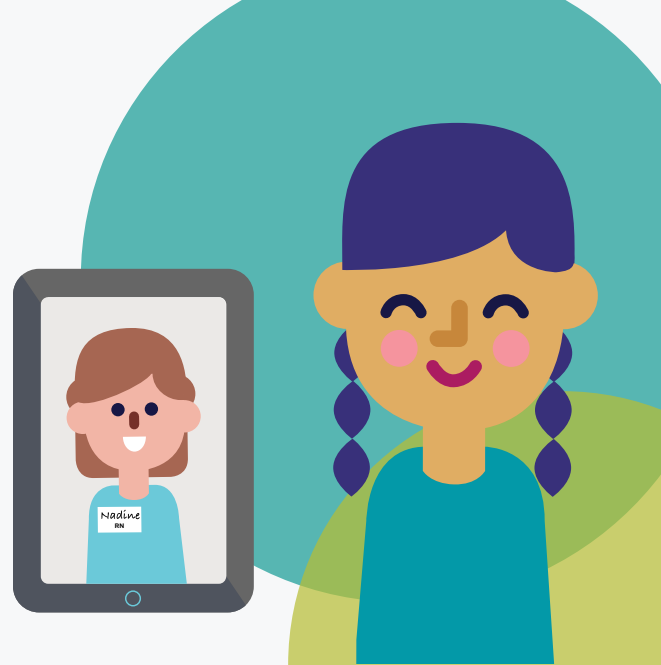


What Matters to Patients with Virtual Care Appointments?

A Resource for Health Care Providers



“What Matters To You?” (WMTY) Day started in Norway in 2014, with the goal of encouraging meaningful conversations between patients, caregivers, families and their health care providers. It is a simple question that can have a big impact on care. When providers have a conversation about what really matters to the people they care for, it helps ensure that care is aligned with patient preferences, builds trusting relationships between patients, families and their health care providers and advances person- and family-centred care. In an evolving world where we are now seeing many health care appointments taking place virtually, this resource, co-designed with patients, will identify what’s important to patients receiving care this way and how trusting relationships can continue to be built and maintained.

Considerations in a virtual care environment

- Continue to create the space, time and atmosphere for “What Matters To You?” conversations during all virtual interactions; the patient can still experience a personalized encounter, regardless of physical distance
- Relationships can still be maintained virtually – you may just need to be more mindful of your communication (both verbal and non-verbal)
- Person- and family-centred care continues to be the philosophy on which care interactions are based. The principles of dignity and respect, information sharing, participation and collaboration can all be upheld in virtual settings and ultimately lead to higher **quality** care that aligns with what’s important to patients¹
- Deliver the same quality of care as an in-person appointment
- Continue to embed **cultural safety and humility** in the virtual context
- Uphold compassion as a guiding principle throughout the encounter
- In some cases, virtual care will not be suitable for those who do not have access to technology or cannot access it safely. Integrate a health equity approach into the care you provide. Learn more through [University of British Columbia's Equipping for Equity Online Modules](#)

¹Locality. Saving money by doing the right thing [Internet]. London: Locality; 2017. Available from: <https://locality.org.uk/about/key-publications/locality-impact-report-2016/>

Before a virtual appointment

I will...

- be mindful of my patient's comfort level, experience and access to technology. I will offer options for how to be seen (e.g., telephone or video call)
- offer flexible appointment times
- provide clear instructions for what can be expected from a virtual care appointment (e.g., Doctors of BC Patient Experience Video on [Introducing Patients to Virtual Care](#))
- define the parameters around virtual health visits and what is feasible to assess virtually (i.e. symptoms suitable for a virtual care appointment)
- share the [“What Matters to You?” with Virtual Care Appointments](#) resource with my patient
- provide supports with technology; this could include a “how to guide” or one-pager on the virtual platform I will be using
- have my [patient prepare for the “What Matters To You?” question](#) when they are booking an appointment (e.g., to think about what matters most to them, what would they like me to know and what they need in order to feel comfortable and safe on their care journey)
- obtain prior knowledge of my patient and their medical history in advance of the appointment

During a virtual appointment

I will...

- introduce myself and establish a relationship. Please review the initiative: [“Hello my name is...”](#)
- reassure my patient that they will be receiving the same quality of care as an in-person appointment
- create a respectful and safe environment – paying attention to cultural differences, language and communication needs
- ask my patient whether confidential information can be shared with those in the room around them (i.e. caregivers, translators), if applicable
- clarify any changes in procedures
- pay attention and listen to the issue (minimize distractions)
- not rush the encounter
- have the [“What Matters To You?” conversation](#)
- encourage my patient to ask questions
- make an extra effort to engage my patient with visual cues (e.g., attentive body language and eye contact)
- determine if a follow up appointment is necessary
- confirm how my patient can contact me if they have additional questions following the appointment

After a virtual appointment

I will...

- arrange for specialist appointments and/or follow up tests as necessary
- share resources that my patient may find helpful
- share necessary information with my patient's care team

Some components of this resource are adapted from the [Virtual Care Resources for Healthcare Providers and Healthcare Leaders](#).

What Matters To You: A Person- And Family-Centred Approach To Virtual Care

Ask What Matters - Listen to What Matters - Do What Matters

Better health outcomes occur when you ask what matters. There are many ways to ask patients what matters to them:

- What is most important to you at the moment?
- Is this virtual appointment meeting your needs?
- What would you like to achieve in our time together?

- What can be done to best support you in your care?
- How can I make sure that you feel safe during our time together?

