

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

WHEN DISCHARGING THE AFE PATIENT AND FAMILY

Discharge can be an emotional event for the patient, their family and the staff. Understanding the patient and family perspective can assist you throughout the discharge process. While the patient may be grateful to be alive, they may also feel competing emotions of sadness, grief, fear, detachment, or anxiety. It may be especially true for first time parents. Spouses or family members may also feel overwhelmed and concerned about how they will be able to help care for their loved ones.

Discharge is also a significant time for the healthcare team as they are often-filled with joy and relief the patient and family can return home. It will be important to gauge and mirror the patient's and family's emotions and offer empathetic communication.

ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR EMOTIONS

- Allow yourself to express your feelings with trusted colleagues
- Accept you may not have all of the answers about the event or diagnosis
- Recognize and anticipate emotional responses from the patient and family

FORMULATE A PLAN

- Complete the AFE Clinical Summary Form
- Assess resources available to the family
 - If the need exists, identify possible solutions (i.e. nurse home visit, lactation consultations, postpartum doula, etc.)
- Establish timing of separate discharge conversations for the patient and infant(s) to avoid information overload
- Gather [AFE Survivor Guide](#) and other discharge information

EXECUTE PATIENT AND FAMILY DISCHARGE COMMUNICATION

- Provide the AFE Survivor Clinical Summary Form, explain intent and briefly review information
- Assess understanding and repeat any key information
- Inform patient of reasons to call OB office or return to ED
- Discuss susceptibility to mental health disorders (Anxiety, Depression, PTSD) for patient, spouse/partner, and family
- Provide AFE Survivor Guide and ensure them they have a community to help them navigate their healing journey
- If comfortable, suggest taking photos with the care team
- Offer the name and contact information if they would like to return to the unit for a gratitude visit
- Document discussion in medical record



WHAT IS AN AFE?

Amniotic fluid embolism (AFE) is an unexpected life-threatening complication. It can affect both mother and baby. It is thought to be the result of an allergic-like reaction to the fluid that enters the mother's bloodstream. This is a normal part of the birth process for most mothers. It can occur during labor or soon after delivery and can cause serious breathing, blood pressure, and bleeding problems.