

➤ Walk-through

Walk-throughs enable providers to better understand the experience of care from the patient's and family's points of view—by going through the experience themselves. This tool is most useful in answering question 1 in the Model for Improvement (*What are we trying to accomplish?*).

Using the Walk-through tool has a variety of benefits:

- It provides first-hand knowledge of what it is like to be a patient in your organization.
- It builds the will and provides incentive for your organization to improve the process of providing care and enhancing the patient experience.
- It generates data that address the total experience of the patient, including direct observations as well as feelings such as frustration, fear, security, confidence, and confusion.
- It generates ideas for process improvement and innovation.

This tool contains:

- ▣ Directions for Walk-throughs

Walk-through

Directions

Walk-throughs give you the opportunity to experience what patients and family members experience when they receive care at your organization. For example, if you are examining the emergency room, choose a particular type of patient (e.g., a person with asthma). You and another team member should then “become” an emergency patient with that disease and the patient’s family member. Here are some tips on how to do it:

1. Let the staff you are likely to come in contact with know in advance that you will be doing this Walk-through.

They might be on their best behavior, but we have found that it is far better to have them part of the process than going behind their back. Ask them not to give you special treatment.

2. Go through the experience **just as the patient and family member would.**

Call in advance, if they would. Drive to the emergency department, drop the patient off, find a place to park, check in. Try to act as if you have never been there before. Follow the signs. Tell the clerk that you're simulating a patient experience and that you want to go through what they do (e.g., the check-in process). Actually fill out the forms if there are ones to fill out. Find out about how long patients wait and sit in the waiting room that long; wait your turn. Do the same in the examining room. If the patient undresses, you should undress. If the patient does a peak flow meter, you should, too. Ask each health care provider to treat you as if you were a real patient. Experience it all.

3. As you go through the process, try to put yourself in the patient's and family member's position.

Look around as they might. What are they thinking? How do they feel at this moment?

4. At each step, ask the staff to tell you what changes (other than hiring new staff) would make the experience better for the patient and what would make it better for the staff.

Write down their ideas as well as your ideas. But also write down your feelings.

5. Finally, between the two of you (the “patient” and the “family member”), write down a list of what needs you found and what improvements could be made.