

Implementing Safety Briefings

Safety Briefings* are a simple, easy-to-use tool that front line staff can use to share information about potential safety problems and concerns on a daily basis. They help increase staff awareness of patient safety issues, create an environment in which staff share information without fear of reprisal, and integrate patient safety into daily work.

Getting started

- **Identify a patient care area**
Choose one where the manager is receptive to testing changes and agrees with the approach of the briefing.
- **Explain the purpose of the briefing and include all staff**
Inform the staff in advance of the plans for the test.
- **Decide who will lead the briefing**
Decide who will conduct the test with the staff: the Unit Manager, the Patient Safety Officer, the Director of Quality Improvement, or a combination of these individuals. On the first few days of the test, someone must lead the discussion and explain the goals to the staff.
- **Use a data collection form to capture the briefing**
Use the Safety Briefing data collection form to start the discussion. If staff do not have any safety issues to discuss, use a few examples from the list of common safety issues.
- **Test on a small scale and obtain staff feedback on the process**
For example, on the day shift for only one week.

Lessons learned - Safety Briefings should be

- **Inclusive and open**
All staff (clinical and non-clinical) have something to share and learn about patient safety. Briefings must be easy to use so that all staff feel confident to participate. Staff members feel comfortable sharing information during a Safety Briefing.
- **Brief**
It is recommended that a time limit of 5 minutes be set and communicated to staff from the beginning.
- **Focused**
Staff should share any concern that they feel affects patient and staff safety. They should also share any ideas for solutions to patient safety problems.
- **Applicable to all patient safety issues**
Many other types of patient safety issues exist (falls, equipment failures, infections, etc.) and this tool is designed so that these and other topics can be added to the briefing discussions.
- **Improvement driven**
Staff members feel comfortable sharing information during a Safety Briefing and that the information collected is for learning and improvement purposes only.

*For more information and to download the Safety Briefing Data Collection Form go to www.ihi.org/IHI/Topics/PatientSafety/SafetyGeneral/Tools/Safety+Briefings+%28IHI+Tool%29.htm