



TeamSTEPPS® TIPS

Handoffs

What is a handoff?

A handoff is the transfer of information (along with authority and responsibility) during transitions in care across the continuum; to include an opportunity to ask questions, clarify, and confirm. Examples of transitions in care include shift change, physicians transferring complete responsibility and patient transfers. A handoff should provide accurate information about a patient's care, treatment and services, current condition and any recent or anticipated changes.

What different components are involved in a handoff?

- **Responsibility and Accountability;** It is your responsibility to know that the person who must accept responsibility in the handoff is aware of this responsibility. You are accountable until both parties are aware of the transfer of responsibility.
- **Uncertainty;** It is your responsibility to clear up any uncertainty or ambiguity of responsibility before the transfer is completed.
- **Verbal Communication;** You should communicate verbally, and cannot assume that the person obtaining responsibility will read or understand written or non-verbal communications.
- **Acknowledgement;** Until it is acknowledged that the handoff is understood and accepted, you cannot relinquish your responsibility.
- **Opportunity;** Handoffs provide an opportunity to review and engage a fresh set of eyes to evaluate the situation for both safety and quality.



Where can I get more information about handoffs?

Visit <https://www.leadingagekansas.org/tsmaterials>