

## Our 4<sup>th</sup> Tone: Communicate Positive Intent

### What is a tone?

- Tones are simple communication practices to show respect and create familiarity among team members. Tones increase frequency of communications. Some tones are non-verbal such as smiling and making eye contact. Some tones are verbal – meaning using words. Saying hello is a verbal tone.
- Tones are good basics in maintaining teamwork. Frequent use of tones create an environment of thinking well together as a team.

### How do I use this tone?

1. Explain to team members, patients, and family what you are doing before you do it.
2. Explain how your action will benefit them and contribute to attaining shared goals.
3. Use inclusive words such as *us* and *we* instead of *you*, *I* or *me*, and *them*.

### Tone in action

- Here is a practical example. Avoid the appearance of multi-tasking when retrieving information from computers. Instead – explain your positive intent by saying “I have the information we need on my computer. I will look it up for you now.”

### What more can I do to be my best?

1. Explain the positive intent of your action before applying tools – especially when asking clarifying questions. Asking a question can sometimes appear to question credibility. Explain that the questions is to help us understand.
2. All tones can be used with team members, patients, and family. This tone is especially helpful with patients and family. They often do not understand how we do things – let alone why. Explain for them. For example – “*I am going now – and I will return in a moment with your blanket or medications or answer, etc.*”
3. Assume a positive intent in your team members’ actions. They have one – perhaps they forgot to communicate their intent to us.
4. Use our tool – peer coaching – to reinforce team members who practice this tone well.
5. Use our peer coaching tool to build better practice habits in team members who do not use this tone well – either by not doing this at all or by being insincere.

### Five (5) tones

#### Respect at ALL times:

1. Smile and greet others (say hello)
2. Introduce using preferred names\* and explain roles.
3. Listen with empathy and with an intent to understand
4. **Communicate the positive intent of your actions**
5. Provide opportunities for others to ask questions

\* Usually first names