

I'M SAFE Checklist

Monitoring your own performance and that of your team members is essential to the delivery of safe, high quality patient care. Cross monitoring your team mates using the I'M SAFE checklist provides a safety net in teams to help ensure mistakes or oversights are detected early. It also allows team members to self-correct as necessary.¹

I'M SAFE checklist			✓ (yes)	✗ (no)
I	Illness	Do I have any symptoms that are impairing my ability to work effectively?		
M	Medication	Have I been taking prescription or over-the-counter drugs that may impact my cognitive or physical ability?		
S	Stress	Am I under psychological pressure at work? Do I have financial, health or family issues that are distracting me?		
A	Alcohol and Drugs	Is alcohol or other recreational substances impairing my decision-making capacity?		
F	Fatigue	Am I tired and not adequately rested to function as a valuable member of the team?		
E	Eating and Elimination	Have I eaten sufficiently to remain adequately nourished until my next break? Am I dehydrated? Do I need to go to the bathroom?		

The goal is to build a workplace culture where team members feel it is safe to be honest, without fear of reprisal, retribution or disdain.

continued

¹ TeamSTEPPS® Fundamentals Course: Module 5. Situation Monitoring. Content last reviewed March 2014. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Rockville, MD. <http://www.ahrq.gov/teamstepps/instructor/fundamentals/module5/slitmonitor.html>

ILLNESS: Even minor illness can impact individual and team performance in healthcare. Judgement, memory, alertness and the ability to make informed decisions and correct calculations can be compromised when you are unwell. Physical coordination and fine motor skills may also be impaired.²

MEDICATION: Prescription and over-the-counter medication can significantly impact both your performance and the contributions you make to your team. There are a multitude of medications such as cough suppressants, decongestants and strong pain relief whose side effects may reduce judgement, memory, vision, coordination, alertness and cognitive function. Other medications such as blood pressure medications, antihistamines or sedatives may depress your nervous system resulting in serious side effects that can affect performance.²

STRESS: Stress is the body's response to the physical and psychological demands that are placed upon it. In the healthcare environment there are many stressors that influence what you say and do, and how you perceive things. Work pressures can result in distraction, markedly decreasing your attention to what is going on around you. Cumulative levels of stress can exceed a person's coping ability, leading to unwarranted risk and decreased performance.²

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS: Alcohol and recreational drugs impair the efficiency of the human body leading to performance deterioration. Even in small amounts, alcohol can impair judgement, decision-making, coordination, social behaviour, memory and alertness. You are also more susceptible to disorientation and hypoxia. Not only are the effects apparent when these substances are in your blood stream, but you may be severely impaired for many hours afterwards due to the hangover effects.²

FATIGUE: The effects of fatigue may not be apparent until serious errors are made. Significant fatigue can result in similar physical and mental impairment as seen with alcohol and recreational drugs. Acute fatigue can be corrected with a healthy diet and adequate rest. Chronic fatigue, brought about by continuously high stress levels, may be experienced as weakness, palpitations, tiredness, breathlessness, headaches, gastro-intestinal problems or irritability.²

EATING AND ELIMINATION: Consuming a healthy diet and maintaining adequate hydration, including paying attention to the length of time between meals, will influence your performance. A low blood sugar and dehydration can result in poor concentration, headache, dizziness, impaired judgement and fatigue, as can postponing a much needed bathroom break.

² Federal Aviation Administration 2016, Remote Pilot – Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems Study Guide, U.S Department of Transportation, pp. 1–79.

For more information

SA Health

TeamSTEPPS®

Email: Health.TeamSTEPPS@sa.gov.au



Government of South Australia
SA Health