

NYU Langone Hospital—Brooklyn Rolls Out Emergency Department C.A.R.E.S. Program



"We've been proud to be the first hospital-based unit for the sessions," says Dr. Ian Wittman (right), chief of service of emergency medicine, NYU Langone Health—Brooklyn, who appears in an introduction video kicking off each educational session.

Curious To Know More?

If you'd like to know more about the C.A.R.E.S. Program watch the [introductory video](#), hosted by Dr. Bret Rudy.

The C.A.R.E.S. initiative educates staffers on how to master the art of the patient experience.

"That's not really my area... You'd have to talk to someone in another department." *What would you say instead?* "That's a great question. Allow me to find out for you."

"[Name], follow me." *What would you say instead?* "Good afternoon, Ms. Smith. My name is ... I am your nurse today. Please follow me."

"Are you a patient? If not, I need your chair." *What would you say instead?* "Are you a patient? [Allow person to answer] May I offer you another seat?"

These scenarios are featured in one section of the NYU Langone Health C.A.R.E.S. Patient Experience education sessions, a program created specifically for our institution. During the three-hour sessions, instructors set the standards for how staff should engage with patients and each other. Facilitators detail commonly used phrases, and how they can be interpreted differently by different people, and instead suggest direct language to make patients feel more comfortable and to communicate with them effectively.

NYU Langone Hospital—Brooklyn's Emergency Department was chosen as the institution's first hospital-based unit to do the C.A.R.E.S. education sessions, an exciting honor. Several hundred Brooklyn frontline staffers participated in the first sessions, held June 10, 13, and 24 in the hospital auditorium.

C.A.R.E.S. stands for the following:

- **Connect** with patients and colleagues
- **Align** with their needs
- **Respond** with timely, effective options
- **Ensure** that expectations are met
- **Sign off** to complete the interaction

NYU Langone launched the program in August 2022, when Andrew Rubin, senior vice president for clinical affairs and ambulatory care, engaged The Ritz-Carlton Leadership Center to tailor its customer experience model to NYU Langone's rapidly expanding Faculty Group Practice (FGP) network. "Knowing the quality of the Ritz-Carlton hospitality brand, I wanted to create a patient experience template that was as close to that model as possible," Rubin says. "My dream was always to start in the FGP but to take the sessions system-wide. The patient experience should go beyond the ambulatory space to become part of the culture of the whole organization."

The sessions kicked off in the 330 FGP locations, where over 6,000 frontline workers completed the educational sessions throughout 2023. The program was so

successful, leadership began looking to roll it out to our Emergency Departments, starting with the Brooklyn campus.

"We've been proud to be the first hospital-based unit for the sessions," says [Ian Wittman, MD](#), chief of service of emergency medicine, NYU Langone Health—Brooklyn, who has worked for eight months alongside Staci Mandola, MSN, RN, director of the Department of Emergency Medicine, to curate the Brooklyn sessions. "The educational sessions are the primer, with the goal that every one of our patients have similar quality of care."

Mandola points out that time spent in a hospital—whether as a patient or a family member of one—can be filled with uncertainty. "Our staff has the opportunity to make those experiences as positive as they can be, but the educational sessions also present strategies for them to turn a negative into a positive experience," she says.

In an introduction video kicking off each session, [Bret Rudy, MD](#), executive vice president and chief of Hospital Operations at NYU Langone Hospital—Brooklyn says, "I found the tools incredibly helpful. People come to us when they're at their most vulnerable. As NYU Langone Health ambassadors, you each play an important role in the patient's journey."

What lies ahead? Monthly C.A.R.E.S. educational sessions will continue in the FGP sites, and NYU Langone leadership is considering where to next expand the program. Dr. Wittman and Mandola plan to work on embedding the C.A.R.E.S. framework into Brooklyn's High Reliability Organization (HRO) huddles, nursing huddles, messaging, and on-boarding process.

"The sessions are not the end; they are actually the beginning," says Dr. Wittman. "These concepts will help define our future as an institution and maintain our excellent patient experience moving forward."