

Delivering a Healthy WA

iSoBAR - a handover 'how to'

Every care giver is an important link in the chain of communication. If just one link is weak, care can be compromised. **iSoBAR** is a structured approach to communication between healthcare providers, designed to ensure each link is strong.

I	IDENTIFY	Introduce yourself (hospital, ward, role/job) and your patient (name, DOB, age, gender, location)
S	SITUATION	Why are you calling? Briefly state the problem, what, when how severe? Admission date and diagnosis. Principle problem, reason for transfer.
O	OBSERVATIONS	Most recent vital signs. Lines in (IVs), lines out (drains)
B	BACKGROUND	Information related to the patient. List of current relevant medications, allergies, IV fluids, test results, (date and time done-comparison to previous results). Resuscitation status. Relevant social information.
A H 1026	AGREE A PLAN	Given the situation, what needs to happen? What are you wanting (advice, orders or transfer). What is the level of urgency? What is the plan?
R	READBACK	Clarify and check for shared understanding. Who is responsible for what and by when?

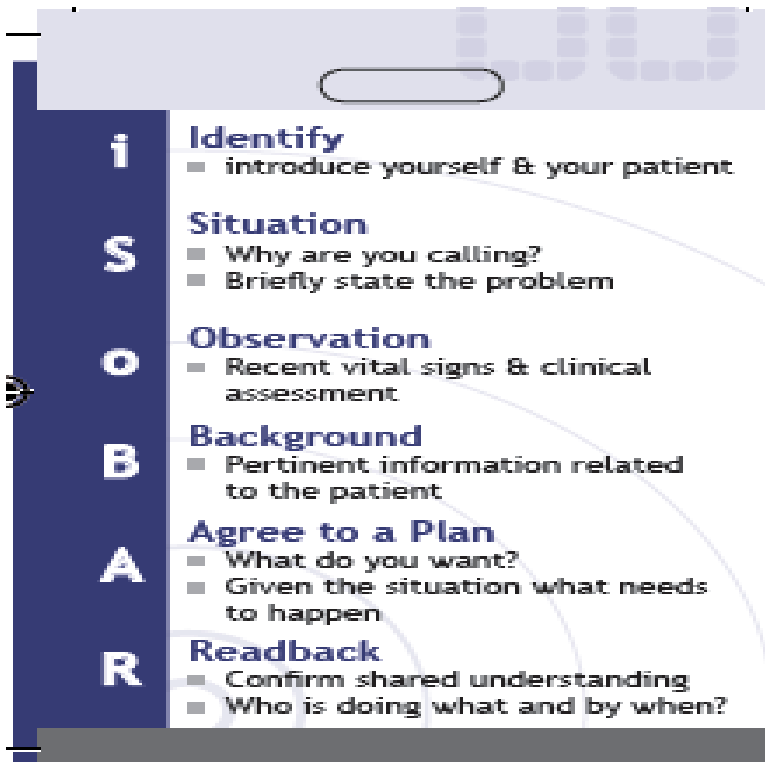
Clinical Handover is vital to all members of the health care team; clear communication and accountability strengthens our capacity to plan and manage the care required by our patients.



Department of Health
Government of Western Australia
WA Country Health Service



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Why handover is important?

Handover is defined as "the transfer of professional responsibility and accountability for some or all aspects of care for a patient or group of patients, to another person or professional group on a temporary or permanent basis". (Australian Medical Association, 2006)

Handover is a skill - if done well it provides clear communication and accountability and strengthens the capacity to plan and manage the care required by patients.

Currently the quality of handover (regardless of the situation) is reliant on the person rather than the process.

Good handover benefits patients:

- **Safety is protected** - lapses in information handover can, and do, lead to mistakes being made. This increases morbidity and mortality.
- **Less discontinuity of care** - poor handover can lead to fragmentation and inconsistency of care.
- **Decreased repetition** - patients dislike having to answer the same questions over and over again. Different individuals providing care will be accepted as long as existing team knowledge is retained.
- **Increased service satisfaction** - every doctor attending a patient can begin where the last left off. Patient perception of professionalism is reaffirmed and improved. ^{14,7}

Good handover benefits health professionals:

- **Educational** - better handover will be of daily benefit to practice and helps the development and broadening of communication skills. A well-led handover session provides a useful setting for clinical education.
- **Professional protection** - accountability has become more prominent with the move towards a more litigious culture within healthcare. Clear and accountable communication can protect a health care professional against blame for errors which occur.
- **Reduction of stress** - having the information and feeling informed allows health professionals to feel less unsupported and more in control of a patient's care.
- **Saves times** - being well informed allows you to take action quickly and effectively with little loss of time.
- **Job satisfaction** - providing the best possible quality of care is highly rewarding and is fundamental to a person's sense of job satisfaction. ^{14,7}

Why is Clinical Handover a Challenge?

Good communication is at the heart of an effective clinical handover.

Inadequate handover impacts on patients and the organisation leading to adverse events such as:

- Delays in treatment
- Patient complaints
- Litigation
- Sentinel events

The Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organisations notes that 65% of sentinel events include communication as a contributing factor.¹

A systematic approach to delivery will enhance communication and consistency

iSoBAR is a step by step process that provides a sequential approach to giving and receiving handover.

