



# SLP's Role in Patient Safety

"Home Deaths from Medication Mistakes Rise Dramatically"

"Adverse Events Common After Hospital Discharge"

"Hospitals to Pay for Mistakes"

Hospital safety is in the news. Policymakers, healthcare workers, and consumers have made the quality of healthcare in the U.S. a top priority.

The push to improve the quality of medical care is influenced by:

- The Joint Commission's (JCAHO) annual list of mandated National Patient Safety Goals for all accredited healthcare organizations
- The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) that developed and uses Patient Safety Indicators (PSIs) to help health system leaders identify potential adverse events occurring during hospitalization and to report progress on improvements in safety
- Adverse events that occur frequently in the post-discharge period and that could have been prevented or ameliorated with simple safety strategies
- Incentive programs such as pay for performance (P4P). Sponsors of these incentive programs state that either rewarding or improving quality of care is a primary goal; the other goal is controlling costs.
- Public reporting of hospital performance in quality and safety.

You have a vital role in the identification and resolution of patient safety concerns in the healthcare facility, during discharge planning, and in the home environment.

- Assessment and treatment of cognitive-linguistic status, reasoning for functional problem solving, memory, and level of awareness is within your scope of practice.
- The therapy setting is conducive to developing the relationship required for open communication about safety concerns.
- You have expertise in patients' optimal communication methods and can facilitate their comprehension of their safety concerns.

Your patients and your employer depend on you to make patient safety a priority. Integrate safety training into your therapy to improve your patients' independence and functional outcomes.

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