

# Preparing to Meet Appraisers

This guide contains information to help Magnet Champions prepare themselves and their work area for UAMS Magnet Site Visit. Being prepared will make the site visit successful and enjoyable!

## Plan

- Magnet Champions and unit/clinic leaders will have a unit-based plan that includes:
  - A designated location to be able to sit and talk with appraiser if that is needed (ensure the space is big enough, in good repair, and clean).
  - Identify staff who can be available to step away from patient care and talk to an appraiser. This includes nurses, care partners, and any other disciplines who are active in the care of patients on your unit. This would be a good time to introduce a carefully selected physician who can speak to the work of nurses in your area.
  - Training / practice opportunities to prepared staff to talk with an appraiser.

## Environment/Safety

- Site Visit is like an open house. Welcome attendees into your unit and show off points of interest with pride
- While the Magnet appraisers are not here to evaluate our physical environment per se, impressions about our work environment are important
- Call Environmental Services or other designated services for:
  - Dirty hallway that needs cleaning
  - Full sharps containers
  - Unattended cleaning cart
  - Unattended oxygen tanks (must be stored in a holder)
  - Any equipment in front of electrical panels; gas control valves.
- If you see food/ drink in work areas where it doesn't belong, remove it.
- Prepare meeting spaces (conference rooms, breakrooms, nursing stations, etc.)
- Make sure your improvement boards are up to date
- Show them your unit accolades (Outstanding Area of the Month, DAISY nurses, certification plaques, High-Reliability Awards, etc.)

## Personal Appearance

- Make sure you look professional and polished. Your appearance says a lot about you (disorganized and sloppy vs. professional and detail oriented).
- Make eye contact/be friendly and confident.
- Smile.
- Watch your body language to make sure you are welcoming and approachable.
- Turn your cell phones and other electronic devices to vibrate.
- If in patient care, hand off your pager and/or Mobile Heartbeat phone to a colleague not participating in the interview.

## Practice with Staff Before the Visit

- Ask staff to think about the following:
  - Why do you think UAMS is a Magnet organization?
  - What are the main points they want the appraisers to know about their unit/entity?
  - What questions DON'T they want the appraisers to ask?
    - Think of answer and you'll be surprised how much this will relieve any anxiety.

- What questions DO they want the appraisers to ask?
  - Think about answer and don't hold back your enthusiasm and sincerity.
- Role play different practice questions. Have staff members discuss questions and practice.
  - You'll be surprised how much this will help.

## Important Visit Etiquette Information

- The appraisers are very familiar with UAMS; they have read the entire narrative document that was submitted as evidence of meeting Magnet criteria. This visit is your chance to **validate, verify, and amplify** what is covered in the document.
- Keep the conversation on a professional level and ask questions if you don't understand something.
- Unlike accreditation surveys when you tend to "answer only what is asked," this is your chance to promote what you are proud of in your work at UAMS.
- Be truthful; don't try to "snow" an appraiser.
- Reply to appraisers' questions directly, concisely, and with pride and enthusiasm.
- Never "bend a rule" for an appraiser.

## Tips for a Successful Visit

- If you don't know the answer to a question:
  - Buy time by asking the appraiser to repeat or clarify the question. This gives you more time to formulate a response.
  - Reply "I've never had to deal with that situation, but if I did I would . . ." Include that you could call a charge nurse, supervisor, or administrator, or find the answer in a resource (online policy/ procedure).
- Help each other out, if one of your peers is struggling, jump in and help answer the question.
- Practice, Practice, Practice . . .
- Show confidence and collaboration with peers and the interdisciplinary team.
- Avoid looking to the manager for approval to answers or for validation of the responses given.
- Take turns among different staff members responding to the questions. Include as many staff as possible and include disciplines other than nursing.
- Magnet appraisers don't expect us to be a perfect organization. If you are asked a question about something that you think we don't do as well as we could, accentuate the positive about where we are, and add comments about what we continue to work on. A commitment to continual improvement is important. Frame comments in the most positive way possible.
- The Magnet visit is not a time to air grievances. Channel concerns to the appropriate people at the appropriate time to address issues.
- Post any needed props around the conference room where the interview will take place. It is okay to refer to a chart on the bulletin board, particularly those items about quality and the great things your area is doing.