

The Family Escalation & Advocacy Guide

What to notice, what to ask, what to say, what to record, and when to push.

Use this guide to: notice change describe it clearly advocate without panic keep hold of what matters	Best used when: something feels wrong you are not being heard the picture is changing you need a calmer next step
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You do not need perfect language in pressured moments. You need calm, factual language. Start with what has changed, when it changed, why you are concerned, and what you need help understanding.

Recognise	Respond	Raise
Represent	Recover	Record

From first concern to clearer action.

1. What to notice and ask

Begin with baseline. What is different from this person's normal - not someone else's normal, and not a textbook version of normal?

What to notice

- What has changed from their usual baseline?
- When did it begin?
- Is it worsening, steady, or coming and going?
- Are there changes in breathing, colour, pain, confusion, mobility, appetite, alertness, speech, or behaviour?

What to ask

- What concerns you most right now?
- What is the safest next step?
- What should I watch for over the next few hours?
- What would make this urgent, and what do you want me to do if that happens?

2. What to say clearly

Try saying:	Why it helps:
"This is what has changed from normal."	It frames your concern as observation, not panic.
"This started at roughly..."	Time helps others judge trend and urgency.
"I am concerned because..."	It states the risk plainly without overcomplicating it.
"I need to understand the next step and what would make this urgent."	It turns a vague interaction into a useful plan.

3. When to push

Escalation is not aggression. It is what you do when the picture is worsening, the concern is not being understood, or the situation is beyond your ability to hold safely.

- If the person is clearly worsening.
- If your concern is not being understood.
- If the advice does not match what you are seeing.
- If the situation feels urgent, unsafe, or outside your capacity to manage.

A simple advocacy script

"I'm not trying to dramatise this. I'm trying to describe a clear change from normal. This started around _____. What I'm seeing is _____. My concern is _____. I need to understand the next step, what to watch for, and what would make this urgent."

4. What to record

Write down:	Why:
What happened	It anchors the event in plain language.
When it happened	Even rough timing can change what happens next.
What changed from normal	This protects the baseline comparison.
Who you spoke to and what was said	It reduces confusion and repeated retelling.
What still needs follow-up	It helps the next conversation start from somewhere useful.

5. Afterwards

Do not skip the recovery piece. Drink water. Sit down. Write the timeline while it is fresh. Note what helped, what did not, and what still needs asking. Good care includes what you carry forward afterwards.

One-page Ward Wise notes sheet

Use this page in real time or after the event while the picture is still fresh.

Person / setting	
What changed from normal?	
When did it begin?	
What concerns me most right now?	
Who did I speak to?	
What advice or action was given?	
What needs follow-up?	

Emergency note: If the person is in immediate danger, severely unwell, or rapidly worsening, seek urgent professional or emergency help. This guide supports clearer action. It does not replace emergency care.