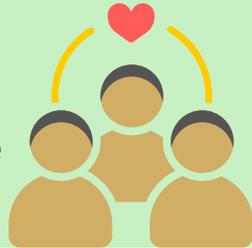


KEYWORDS: SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH; SOCIAL FACTORS; ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS; SOCIAL FUNCTIONING

### DESCRIPTION

Per the NCP (2018), addressing the social determinants of health that impact patient/family functioning and quality of life is critical. Furthermore, appropriately using interdisciplinary resources allows the team to optimize function and achieve patient/family goals of care.



### COVID-19 CONCERNS

- The social fabric has been significantly impacted throughout the COVID-19 pandemic
- “Normal” communication pathways, support systems, and human connectivity has evaporated in the context of quarantining and isolation
- COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted Persons of Color, those with low socioeconomic status, and other marginalized and vulnerable populations; it is critical to understand individualized social determinants in each healthcare scenario
- Social factors include the environments in which people live, work, and play, their access to education, food, and health and social care services, and the determinants that directly inform their ability to create, sustain, and nourish their experience of health



### ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- Is there an in-depth social history available for this patient and/or family unit? If so, familiarize yourself with their background to better understand their social factors
- Remember that people living in low-income zip codes may have trouble obtaining certain prescription medication (e.g., opioids), accessing routine healthcare services, and may have safety or wellbeing concerns that extend beyond your understanding
- Social isolation has become heightened throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, impacting physical and social functioning, access to care, and quality of life
- Those experiencing domestic violence or substance abuse may have confronted increased challenges during COVID-19; assess and intervene accordingly



### QUESTIONS FOR PATIENT/FAMILY

- Can you tell me about your social support network and community during COVID-19?
- Have you had feelings of isolation during COVID-19? Has it affected your health and wellbeing?
- Do you have concerns about your social welfare during COVID-19 once you are discharged?
- Do you have any social needs or concerns that are unmet as a result of COVID-19 and having cancer?



### ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS FOR CLINICAL PRACTICE

- Social worker involvement is imperative to the broader social welfare of the patient and family; advocate for consultation upstream in the continuum as appropriate
- Ascertain a clear understanding of the patient’s current and desired social functioning to help them best achieve their goals now and upon discharge
- Involve family caregivers and other social support members in social history taking as appropriate and whenever possible with the permission of the patient



### RELATED RESOURCES

- American Hospital Association. (2020). Awareness of Social Needs Can Help Address Health Inequity during COVID-19 (Issue Brief). Available at: <https://www.aha.org/system/files/media/file/2020/04/awareness-of-social-needs-can-help-address-health-inequity-during-covid-19.pdf>
- Rodin G et al. (2020). The Psychological and Social Implications of physical isolation for Patients and Families During the Coronavirus Pandemic – Briefing Note. Global Palliative Care and Covid-19 Series. Available at: <http://globalpalliativecare.org/covid-19/uploads/briefing-notes/briefing-note-the-psychological-and-social-implications-of-physical-isolation-for-patients-and-families-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic.pdf>

