

3 what does  
advocacy have to do  
with providing  
healthcare (see  
pages 120 and 121 ...

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THE ROLE OF ADVOCACY IN HEALTHCARE by and The Role of Advocacy in Healthcare Advocacy, according to Merriam-Webster, is the process or act that upholds a proposal or a cause (2009). In healthcare, advocacy usually occurs when patient vulnerability is present (Folley, Minick, & Kee 2002). For example, when health professionals “engage in health research either as participants or because the patients they care for are participants” (Barkway 2009, p. 120), they must ensure that the research is “rights-oriented and equality-seeking” (Stout & Downey 2006). This is a crucial role because it requires the ability to find a middle ground between what the patient wants and what is best for the patient.

A healthcare provider will always encounter times when patients are afraid to demand for what they want (Stout & Downey 2006). In these cases, the healthcare providers role is to encourage the patients to voice out their needs, wants, and concerns (Barkway 2009, p. 120). For example, in health researches, when the patient feels uncomfortable because of the feeling that a participants identity is not adequately protected, the healthcare provider should be alert enough to sense this (Folley, Minick, & Kee 2002), and encourage the patient to voice out their concerns and have them answered. On the other hand, there will also be times when patients will insist on getting what they want (Stout & Downey 2006). A healthcare provider practicing advocacy should be able to provide the patient with ample and accurate information regarding the concern to help the patient come up with the best possible decision. The healthcare provider should also be able to act as an adviser and provide the patient with options to consider. For example, a patient may want to participate in a health research but some of the

research processes may put critical health procedures (for the patient) on hold. The healthcare provider must ensure that the patient is informed of positive and negative consequences of the decision (Barkway 2009, pp. 120-1).

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