

The Home Visit Preparation Checklist

Evidence Base: [NHPCO Standards of Practice](#) · [Journal of Pain & Symptom Management](#) · [Sabar \(2024\) Professional Guest Framework](#)

Before You Leave: Mental Preparation

Review the patient's chart: diagnosis, current medications, recent changes in condition, advance directives on file.

Check the most recent IDG notes — what did the team identify as priorities?

Mentally rehearse the visit: What is the purpose? What questions might arise?

Pause for 60 seconds of intentional breathing before starting your car.

"The visit begins before you arrive. Your internal state walks into the room with you."

[Sabar et al. \(2024\). The Professional Guest. Palliative Care and Social Practice.](#)

Clinical Bag Essentials

Stethoscope, pulse oximeter, blood pressure cuff, thermometer

Wound care supplies: gauze, tape, saline, barrier cream

Symptom management toolkit: sublingual medications, suppositories, comfort kit checklist

Supplies Gloves (multiple sizes), hand sanitizer, shoe covers Flashlight (for poorly lit homes)

Printed family education materials

[NHPCO/Alliance for Care at Home. Hospice Survey Readiness Toolkit.](#)

Personal Preparation

Dress in layers — homes may be 80°F+ or unheated

Wear closed-toe, quiet shoes you can easily remove

Keep a spare change of clothes in your car

Minimize cologne/perfume — patients may be scent-sensitive

Phone on silent. Not vibrate. Silent.

Water bottle and a protein bar — you may not eat for hours

Ensure your car has adequate fuel



Entering the Home

Knock and wait — even if expected. This is their space.

Remove shoes if requested or if the home is shoe-free

Scan the environment: photos, religious symbols, temperature

Greet the patient first, then family — even if they are not responsive

Ask: "Is now still a good time?" Respect their rhythm.

Position yourself at or below eye level with the patient

"Upon entering patients' homes, professional staff members systematically scan for cues such as family photos, home esthetics, and personal items that can spark conversation and create intimacy."

Sabar et al. (2024). *The Professional Guest*. *Palliative Care and Social Practice*.

Before You Leave the Home

Summarize what you observed and any changes in the plan

Confirm the family understands when to call hospice

Ensure medications are labeled and accessible

Ask: "Is there anything else on your mind before I go?"

After the Visit: Self-Check

Debrief with yourself: What went well? What was hard?

If the visit was emotionally heavy, call a colleague or supervisor

Note any follow-up items for the IDG

"Compassion is consistently emphasized as a core aspect of professionalism and a central therapeutic tool."

Sabar et al. (2024). *Palliative Care and Social Practice*.

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