


UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

Effective Goals of Care Conversations

Kathy Plakovic, ARNP, AOCNP, ACHPN
 Palliative Care Nurse Practitioner
 Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center
 Teaching Associate
 University of Washington



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Objectives

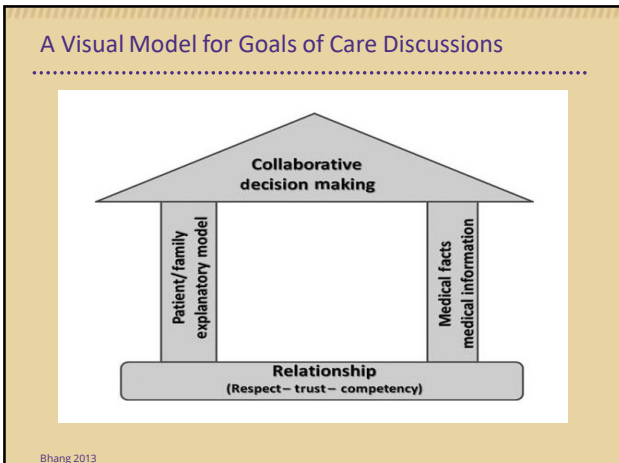
- Identify the steps needed to have an effective Goals of Care (GOC) conversations
- Understand the importance of health literacy
- Understand the need to revisit GOC discussions

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Barriers

- Lack of training
 - Serious Illness Care Program- ariandnelabs.org
 - Vital Talk- vitaltalk.org
 - Respecting Choices- respectinchoices.org
- Insufficient time
- Discomfort discussing prognosis or end of life
- Uneasiness responding to emotions

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Early Goals of Care Conversation

| Step | Example |
|-------------------|--|
| Pause | "There is something I'd like to put on our agenda today." |
| Ask | "I would like your opinion on something. Occasionally one of my patients gets sick suddenly and I can't talk to them." |
| Understand | "Have you ever heard about advance directives or living wills?" |
| Suggest | "Have you ever thought about who would be the best person to make medical decisions if you were too sick to make them yourself?" |
| Expect | "I can see this is making you feel concerned." |


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Discussing Serious News

| Step | Example |
|----------------------------|---|
| Get Ready | "Let me take a minute to make sure I've got what I need." |
| Understand | "What have other clinicians told you is going on?" |
| Inform | "The CT scan shows that the cancer has gotten worse" |
| Demonstrate empathy | "I can see this news is not what you were hoping for." |
| Equip | "I want you to be prepared for the next step. Can I explain..." |



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The 3 W's

- **Wish** - Align with the patient's hopes
- **Worry** - Verbalize the option that the hope may not be achievable
- **Wonder** - Explore what the probable outcome would mean for the the patient and invite brainstorming into coping with the alternate reality

Healthier Washington Collaboration Portal 2022

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Case Study

Betsy is 78 and has widely metastatic breast cancer. She has progressed through multiple lines of chemotherapy and has a poor performance status. She is hopeful to prolong her life as long as possible a requests further chemotherapy.

"Betsy, I **wish** I had some medication that would help you. We have tried several things that have not helped. I **worry** more therapy will make you feel worse instead of better. I **wonder** if you would feel better and live longer without further treatment."

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8 Ways to Diffuse Emotion

| Step | Example |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Silence | 10-20 seconds |
| Normalizing/validation | "It is normal to be upset at such a difficult moment." "It is understandable that you are angry." |
| Name or acknowledge the emotion | "You seem sad." "I can see you are upset." |
| Encourage expression | "Tell me more about how you are feeling." |
| Paraphrase and repeat back | "If I understand you correctly, you are angry because you were told your mother's pneumonia would respond to antibiotics" |
| Apologize | "I am sorry that things have not turned out as we might have wished." |
| Gesture or touch | Offering tissues |
| Praise | "You are very brave" |

Levin, T. 2010

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Facilitators and Barriers

Facilitators

- patient's poor functional status
- patient's high health literacy
- family understanding and acceptance

Barriers

- low health literacy
- religiosity

Volandes AE 2008, Schulman-Green D 2018, de Vries 2019

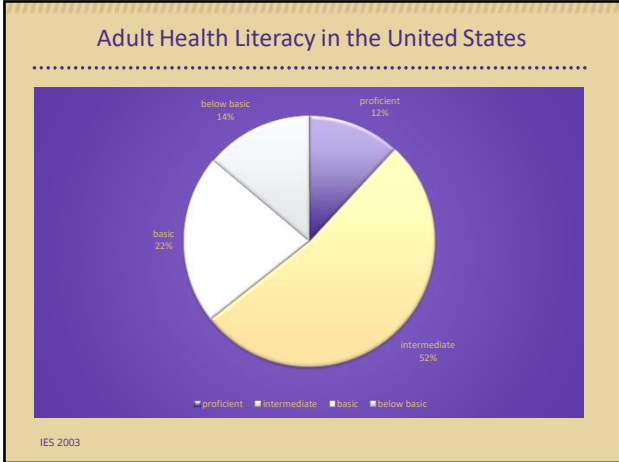
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Health Literacy

Personal health literacy is the degree to which individuals have the ability to find, understand, and use information and services to inform health-related decisions and actions for themselves and others.

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy/learn/index.html> Accessed 7/26/2022

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- ### Populations at Risk
- Older
 - Racial and ethnic minorities
 - Non-native English speakers
 - Low income and/or low education level
- Fleary SA 2019

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- ### Health Literacy Best Practices
- Use clear, jargon free information
 - Write text at lower reading levels
 - Add images to materials
 - “Ask-Tell-Ask” method
- Nouri SS 2019, Houlihan MCK 2021

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- ### Readdressing Goals of Care
- Care transitions
 - Hospitalization
 - Admission to SNF
 - New chronic/life-limiting illness
 - Progression of disease

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REMAP

| Step | Example |
|--|--|
| Reframe | “Given this news, it seems like...” |
| Expect emotion & empathize | “It’s hard to deal with all this.” |
| Map the future | “Given this situation, what’s most important for you?” |
| Align with the patient’s values | As I listen to you, it sounds the most important things are [x,y,z]. |
| Plan treatments that match values | Here’s what I can do now that will help you do those important things. What do you think about it? |

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Responding to Hope for a Miracle

- A- Affirm patient's belief
- M- Meet patient/family where they are
- E- Educate from your role as a medical provider
- N- No matter what



Cooper 2014

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Self-Compassion in GOC Conversations

- Acknowledge that this is HARD.
- It's normal to have your own emotions come up.
- Allow time for yourself to prepare.
- Give yourself space to debrief or process afterwards.
- Do not expect perfection.

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Questions



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