

## WAYS AND WORDS THAT WORK

### WAYS

### WORDS

Relationship

- Quiet space, silence phones and pager, request permission to enter, sit down, eye contact
  - Assess symptoms first
  - Elicit their agenda first
  - Review medical records, talk to rest of the team
- **Ask permission** *"Is this a good time to talk?"*
  - Are you comfortable enough to talk now?
  - What are your expectations for our conversation today?
  - We want to provide you the **Best Care Possible from your perspective**. Can we talk about that?

Patient Story

- Match the pace of the patient
  - Listen carefully
  - Don't interrupt
  - Anticipate emotions
- Obtain Patient Story:** "can you tell me, in your own words, what you have heard about your medical condition?  
Are you able to do the things you enjoy?  
Where do you get strength and support?  
What is your body telling you?"

Medical Story

- If they do not want to talk, don't proceed
  - Offer only realistic hope
  - Deliver information in "Headlines" (15 words or less)
  - Avoid medical jargon
- **Ask permission:** Would it be okay if I share medical information now?
  - **Deliver headline & BE SILENT (let them break silence!)**  
"I am worried that what we are hoping for may not happen"  
"The cancer has come back"
  - **Name Emotion/Empathetic Statement/Align Hope**  
"This is hard" "I cannot imagine" "I wish I could make this into good news, but I can't" "This is upsetting"  
**Align hope/intention:** *My hope is that you/your loved one will get better. I also want us to have a plan if what we are hoping for doesn't happen.*  
"Given your medical situation, what is most important to you?"

Recommendation

- Make a medical recommendation that aligns patient priorities **AND** reflects what is medically possible
  - When you recommend limiting interventions, make sure you first offer what you WILL do
- Before Making a Recommendation:**
- This is what I hear is important to you: (list them)
  - Is this correct? (confirm that the list is correct)
  - Would it be okay if I make a recommendation? (**ASK PERMISSION**)
- When making a recommendation:** "Based on what is important to you, I recommend the following" Make recommendations that match their goals.
- After making a recommendation:** What do you think about this as a plan? (Obtain their opinion about your recommendations)

Collaborative

- Continue to partner with them
  - Consider a time limited trial w/specific goal
  - Protect the quality of the process rather than judging the quality of their decision
- **Affirm their decision:** Let me summarize what I have heard from you: *"it sounds like it is really important to you that we place a PEG/treat with Abx/ intubate / perform CPR"*
  - **Establish a functional End-Point for Time-Trial:**  
**Going forward, how will we know that this plan is working/not working?** (e.g. patient- "more awake/participate in PT/come off Respirator")
  - **Finish with Teach-Back:** "To make sure I have done a good job communicating, can you share with me what we talked about?"

