5 Things to Talk About with Your Patients & Clients

Choose one or more topics and sample questions that are right for you and your patient/client to make a plan for the best possible care.

1. Let’s talk about your understanding of your health condition and treatments.
   - What’s your understanding of your health condition? What would you like to know from me today?
   - Looking ahead: What information would you like about the likely path of your condition and the treatment choices you may face?

2. Let’s talk about your goals and explore the care you want and do not want.
   - What are you experiencing in managing your health? Are things changing?
   - Tell me more about your goals to feel well and what you’d like to be able to do.
   - What is working to help you manage your health; where do you need some help?
   - What’s important to you- your values, family traditions, care choices and preferences?
   - What frustrates or worries you?
   - What things make it harder to stay well - (travel to appointments; problems with medicine, food, housing; feeling stressed/depressed; getting care close to home/ at home; being alone; need help).

3. Let’s talk about your care plan and completing your planning documents.
   - Let’s talk about your treatment options to stay well and get you to your goals.
   - Let’s set some do-able goals and make any adjustments: what are you able to do?
   - Knowing your goals and care preferences, here’s what I recommend. Does that sound right?
   - Would you like to complete or update your planning documents. * You can complete-
     - Health Care Proxy: You can choose a trusted person as your Health Care Agent to make care decisions for you if you are not able to make decisions yourself.
     - Personal Directive: Write down what’s important to you and your instructions for care.

4. Let’s be sure your plan is up to date and I know your care choices.
   - Let’s review your prognosis and treatments. Have your priorities and care choices changed?
   - Here’s my understanding of the care you want and do not want. Is that correct?
   - Let’s review your medical record to make sure my notes reflect your care choices.
   - Let’s check that your Health Care Proxy is up to date and in your medical record.

5. Let’s be sure your care providers can honor your choices.
   - Have you needed emergency care since we last spoke? Were your choices known and honored?
   - Let’s talk about steps we can take now to ensure in an emergency your records are available.
   - How much does your family/ Health Care Agent know about your plan? Would you like to schedule a time to talk together?
   - Would you like to talk more? Let’s schedule a time to continue our conversation.

Notes:

*Multilingual Health Care Proxy and Personal Directive are available on the Honoring Choices website.

See the Care Provider Conversation Guide Series on our website. Guide 1 helps you start a simple conversation. Guides 2-4 focus on managing health & chronic illness and living well with serious illness.