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?
   - Would you like to hear about treatment options for added support, like Palliative Care and Hospice Care, and when they might fit into your care goals?

2. **Let’s talk about your goals and explore the care you want and do not want.**
   - Let’s discuss your prognosis and care goals. Have your priorities changed?
   - Tell me what a good day looks like and what you are able to do. What’s a hard day look like?
   - What’s important to you - your values, family traditions, care choices and preferences?
   - What worries you the most?
   - What makes it hard to stay well- (travel to appointments; treatment side effects; cost of care, food, medicines, housing; feeling stressed or depressed; getting care close to or at home; need help).

3. **Let’s talk about your care plan and completing your planning documents.**
   - Let’s review some treatments options that offer (extra) support and get you to your goals.
   - What information would you like about possible tradeoffs you may face if your condition worsens?
   - 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: Choose a Health Care Agent to make care decisions on your behalf.
     - Personal Directive: Write down what’s important to you and your instructions for care.
     - MOLST OR CC/DNR: Let’s talk about your treatment options given your current condition, and document the care you want in a MOLST form, Medical Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment form or a CC/DNR, Comfort Care/Do Not Resuscitate Order.

4. **Let’s be sure your plan is up to date and I know your care choices.**
   - Here’s my understanding of the care you want and do not want. Is that correct?
   - If your condition worsens, and I am not able to speak with you, let’s discuss and write down-
     - the type of treatments you are willing to go through to possibly gain more time;
     - at what point you’d prefer to stop active treatments and choose comfort care.
   - Let’s review your medical record to make sure my notes reflect your care choices.
   - Let’s check that your Health Care Proxy and/or MOLST are 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 can we 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, and explore the support available to your family?
   - 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 and chronic illness and living well with serious illness.

© 2022 Honoring Choices Massachusetts • www.honoringchoicesmass.com
Who’s Your Agent® is a public education & engagement program to help adults make a health care plan and receive person-centered care all through their lives.