

Strategies to Enhance ACP/GCD Conversations

Do More Of

- Asking open-ended telling questions such as:
 - “What concerns do you have about your health?”
 - “Is there some health information you would find helpful?”
 - “What life experiences make you think about the type of healthcare you’d want?”
 - “What do you think makes your life worth living?”
- Asking the patient “What are some of your questions?” and/or if what you have said makes sense (especially after explaining a component of the process)
- Saying the terms ‘advance care planning’ and ‘goals of care’ during your conversation. These terms are often unfamiliar and repetition will help patients become more familiar with the terminology.
- Praising the patient for ACP/GCD tasks completed

Start Doing

- Pausing after every few statements for a count of four (especially when explaining about the ACP process)
- Asking one question at a time, with a pause after each question to allow the patient to answer
- Associating technical terms with lay language slogans:
 - “Advance Care Planning” = “Plan your healthcare together”
 - “Goals of Care” = “Talk about your medical wishes”
 - “The Green Sleeve” = “Document medical plans together”
- Acknowledging and supporting patients’ hopes whenever possible – avoid dismissing hopes

Do Less Of

- Asking questions that ‘test’ the patient’s knowledge such as “What do you know about CPR?”
- Asking questions for which you have a predetermined answer in mind – rather, keep an open mind for a response
- Focusing on what you cannot do for them – rather focus more on what can be done to meet their goals for care and to make their life worth living
- Overburdening the patient with too much information at one time – rather, tailor information-giving to patient’s goals of care

Stop Doing

- Asking questions that include the word “any” (“Do you have any questions?”) – rather ask “Do you have some questions?”
- Merging a question into your previous talk – count to four between your talk and the question



Key Points:

- Patients display more engagement when ACP/GCD discussions are **enacted as a conversation** rather than an interview or information session
- Patients display more engagement and greater understanding when HCPs **use patient information materials** during the ACP conversations. HCPs 'using' the materials involves:
 - Giving the patient a copy of the material near the beginning of the conversation
 - Reading from and/or pointing out several pieces of information (i.e., more than two) about ACP/GCD to the patient (and family if applicable) from the material
 - Telling the patient that the material is for him/her to take home and share with those in his/her life if he/she so chooses
 - Explaining to the patient (family) that the material is a reference to help him/her understand and/or remember what has been discussed during the consultation