

Shared Decision Making—Toolkit

Shared decision making involves setting the stage for the decision-making process, discussing options for care and, finally, making the decision.

Set the Stage for a Team-Based Decision (“TEAM TALK”)

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Invite your patient and caregiver to participate in decision making.
- Discuss the roles of the patient and caregiver(s) in the decision-making process.
- If caregivers are part of the decision-making team, encourage their participation.
- Assess the patient’s cognitive abilities if indicated.
- Discuss the patient’s goals and preferences for treatment. Are costs an important consideration?

WHAT YOU CAN SAY

“Let’s work as a team to make a decision that suits you best.” ∞

“What are your goals for this decision?” ∞

*“What are you hoping for in life?”**

*“What are you most afraid of losing in life?”**

“How important are costs for this decision?”

“To what extent are costs of treatment a factor in this decision?”

“What is most important to you for this decision?”

∞ Glyn Elwyn et al., 2017.

*Neeltje Vermunt et al., 2019.

- Ask open-ended questions.
- Refer patients and caregivers to the [Shared Decision-Making Tools](#) on the FAIR Health Consumer website before speaking about the different options. Patients and caregivers can refer to the decision tools beforehand.

RESOURCES

On this site: [Shared Decision-Making Tools](#)

Refer patients to [Patient Educational Content](#).

Use Shared Decision-Making Tools to Discuss Risks and Benefits of Options

(“OPTION TALK”)

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Where possible, refer to shared decision-making tools when discussing options.
- Use familiar, easy-to-understand language when explaining options.
- Ask whether costs matter to the patient/caregiver for the decision. If so, discuss using the decision tools on FAIR Health Consumer, or the medical cost lookup on the [site](#).

WHAT YOU CAN SAY

“Let’s compare the possible options.”[∞]

“These options may have different effects for you compared with others, so I want to describe the options and their effects.”

“We can discuss related costs if you feel they are important for this decision.”

“Some people may find that cost may matter more to them. If that is the case, we can go over how the costs compare for the clinical options. If you would like to know the costs, we can do that here, or I can refer you to someone who can discuss this with you.”

[∞] Glyn Elwyn et al., 2017.

RESOURCES

[Communicating Numbers to Your Patients: A Reference Guide for Health Care Providers](#)

[Shared Decision Making Tools](#) on the FAIR Health Consumer website

Use Risk Communication Principles:

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Explain the potential risks associated with each treatment option using statistical information:

- Describe the estimated risk using numbers and not descriptive words, e.g., “low risk.” Patients may have a different definition of risk.
- Use standardized vocabulary consistent with national guidelines.
- Use a consistent denominator when explaining statistical risk (e.g., out of 100 people).
- Present an equal balance of positive and negative outcomes.
- Provide absolute numbers rather than relative risks.

- Use visual aids where appropriate. *

© Glyn Elwyn et al., 2017.

*John Paling, 2003.

Based on: AHRQ, [Communicating Numbers to Your Patients: A Reference Guide for Health Care Providers](#)

Check for Understanding: Did the patient and/or caregiver understand the options?

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Watch for trouble making the decision.
- You can use the “teach-back” method to determine whether patients and caregivers understand the options and to help clarify any uncertainty.

WHAT YOU CAN SAY

“Could you tell me how you understand the treatment choices I’ve presented to you for your [condition]?”

“We have discussed different options for [your condition]. So that I make sure I explained them clearly, can you tell me how they are different?”

“I would like to know how well I explained the options for treatment. Could you tell me how you understand the treatment choices I’ve presented [for your condition]?”

“We talk about [name the options]. Would you be able to tell me how you would explain them to someone?”

“When you think about these options, what matters most to you?”

“Comparing the possible risks, what matters most to you? What worries you the most?”

(Based on: [AHRQ SHARE Approach to Shared Decision Making](#))

RESOURCE

[Using the Teach-Back Technique: A Reference Guide for Health Care Providers](#)

Make the Decision Together ("DECISION TALK")

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Reach a decision about care based on the patient's values, goals and preferences (and based on your expertise).

WHAT YOU CAN SAY

"Tell me what matters most to you for this decision."[∞]

"What additional questions do you have for me to help you make a decision?"^{*}

"Would you like more time to think about the options or are you ready to decide?"^{*}

[∞] Glyn Elwyn et al., 2017.

^{*}[AHRQ SHARE Approach to Shared Decision Making](#)

References:

1. [AHRQ SHARE Approach to Shared Decision Making](#)
2. AHRQ, [Using the Teach-Back Technique: A Reference Guide for Health Care Providers](#)
3. AHRQ, [Communicating Numbers to Your Patients: A Reference Guide for Health Care Providers](#)
4. Neeltje Vermunt et al. "Goal Setting Is Insufficiently Recognised as an Essential Part of Shared Decision-Making in the Complex Care of Older Patients: A Framework Analysis." BMC Family Practice 20, no. 76 (June 2019), <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12875-019-0966-z>.
5. Glyn Elwyn et al., "A Three-Talk Model for Shared Decision Making: Multistage Consultation Process," BMJ 359 (November 2017): j4891, <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.j4891>.
6. John Paling, "Strategies to Help Patients Understand Risks," BMJ 327, no. 7417 (September 27): 745-748, <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.327.7417.745>.