



# CAN WE TALK ABOUT WHAT MATTERS TO ME?

## Five Tips to Help You Communicate Your Needs and Concerns with Your Health Care Team

Good quality care addresses what matters to you alongside what's the matter with you. This is the foundation of person-centered care that treats the person beyond the disease. Here are five tips to help make this happen.



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## **1 Tell your doctor and health care team about you as a person.**

Share a few details about the things that are most important to you. Are you a parent? What do you do in your free time that brings you joy? Talk about your day-to-day activities that describe who you are outside of your illness and how those activities make you feel. These non-medical details are helpful to share so your health care team can provide you with the best possible care.

## **2 Write down what concerns you most and share that information with your doctor.**

It's helpful when you are direct and honest about your concerns and hopes so your doctor and loved ones can respond with care that matches what you want and need. Some things to consider: Do you feel that you have the help and support you need at home? Are you concerned about the total costs of your care or the medications you may need? Your circumstances and priorities may change over time, so continue to raise your concerns to the people caring for you so they can make adjustments.

## **3 Come prepared for your appointments.**

Before your appointment, think about what you want to say to explain why you are seeing your doctor. In addition to the things that matter most to you, what concerns and key questions do you have? It also helps to bring a list of medications you are taking. If you are experiencing pain, symptoms or

other distress, keep a daily log of when they occur and record the severity and how they interfere with your activities so you can share those details with your doctor. Having a friend or family member with you can help because they can listen, take notes, help you remember details about how you feel at home and be your advocate to get care that meets your needs.

## **4 Talk about any challenges you face.**

Your experiences living with your medical condition and getting treatments for it, including how they make you feel and affect your daily life, are essential pieces of information your health care team needs to know that you are uniquely positioned to provide. For example, are you able to take your medications as prescribed? Do you have transportation challenges in getting to appointments? Are you struggling to keep up with living expenses due to your illness?

## **5 Tell your doctor how you prefer to receive information.**

Tell your doctor what kind of communication will help you understand your condition and make health care decisions. For example, some people like to hear all the facts and statistics, while others prefer only a summary of the key points. In every case, you should feel heard and understood. Your doctor and others on your care team should listen to you and your concerns without speaking over you. Having an open dialogue with your doctor and care team will help you build a stronger relationship with them that will ultimately lead to a better care plan and care experience.