

## STEPS IN ALIGNING HEALTHCARE WITH PATIENTS' HEALTH PRIORITIES\*

- Review the patient's one-page health priorities template when first completed and then periodically. Health goals and care preferences may change although values typically remain stable over time.
- Follow the Strategies and Troubleshooting for Patient Priorities-Aligned Decision-making to help patients achieve their most important goal consistent with what they are willing and able to do to achieve it.
- Document and communicate patient priorities-aligned decisions with patients and other clinicians

## STRATEGIES FOR PATIENT PRIORITIES ALIGNED DECISION-MAKING\*

- **Strategy: Use patients' health priorities as the focus of communication and decision-making**
  - Patients will feel listened to and will be more likely to adhere to a mutually agreed to plan while providing an anchor for decision-making in the face of uncertainty and complexity.
  - Link the recommendations to the patient's health outcome goals and healthcare preferences.
  - Ask patients if they have suggestions for achieving their goals. Patients often are aware of resources and options they have not shared.
- **Strategy: Use serial trials to start, stop or continue interventions based on achieving health goals**
  - Explain that there are several possible choices and acknowledge the need for adjustments over time; these are positive ways to acknowledge and address uncertainty.
  - Start by discussing interventions most likely to help The One Thing (symptom, healthcare task, medication, etc.) that patient feels most impedes their most important health goal; this approach simplifies decision-making and improves adherence.
- **Strategy: Reconcile decisions among clinicians when there are different recommendations**
  - Because conflicting recommendations usually occur when clinicians use different information in decision-making, make sure everyone is using the same information to arrive at recommendations.
  - Agree that the patient's health outcome goals and healthcare care preferences are the basis for recommendations.
  - Brainstorm alternatives to arrive at a mutually agreeable plan.

## TROUBLESHOOTING CHALLENGES IN PATIENT PRIORITIES ALIGNED DECISION-MAKING

- **If the patient's health goals are not achievable with what they are willing & able to do**
  - Ensure that the patient understands the healthcare activities necessary to achieve their health goals
  - Explore and address the reason for nonadherence to activities essential to achieving their health goals and decrease the burden or discomfort of the activity
  - If the patient remains unable or unwilling to adhere, return to the value underlying the goal and work with patient to modify the goal to make it achievable with activities patient willing and able to do.
- **If the patient's health goals are not achievable given their health status and trajectory**
  - Explore your patient's understanding of health trajectory. Share your understanding of the patient's medical conditions and expected trajectory to the extent the patient is ready to discuss.
  - Identify an achievable goal that addresses the patient's underlying values.
- **Accept the patient's decision if the patient understands the harms and benefits of the alternative strategies**
  - It is helpful to consider that older adults may appropriately be more focused on current rather than future health status
  - Be realistic about the absolute benefit of health interventions. Benefits are often small, or indeterminant in the setting of multiple and advancing chronic illnesses.
  - Document conversation and decision, including patient's and family's understanding of potential consequences.

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