

*Conducting A Family Meeting* – To optimize the care of both the patient and their family through the conduct of a routine family meeting that promotes communication and increases understanding about a) the disease; b) its course and prognosis; c) the key goals of care, and d) assessment of the family’s needs, strengths, coping, decision-making capacity and wishes for the future. In the palliative care setting, the creation of a comprehensive care plan that the family understands and agrees with will facilitate teamwork and enhanced coping for all concerned.

Strategies	Skills	Process Tasks
Planning and prior set-up to arrange the family meeting	Clarify Invite questions Restate	Consider who should attend & extend invitations; explain rationale & benefits; acknowledge challenges in attending. Will the patient be included? Who will facilitate? What disciplines will help? Co-facilitators? Plan seating, privacy, tissues
Welcome and orient to the goals of the family meeting	Declare agenda items Invite agenda items Negotiate agenda Ask open questions Clarify Restate	Round of introductions and orientation; include all present at meeting. Normalize anxiety Proportional to intensity
Check each family member’s understanding of the illness & its prognosis	Declare agenda items Invite agenda items Negotiate agenda Ask open questions Clarify Restate	Round of introductions and orientation; Include all present at meeting. Normalize anxiety Proportional to intensity
Check for consensus about the current goals of care	Ask open & circular questions Clarify Restate Summarize	Compare & contrast oncological, nursing, social, psychological & spiritual goals of care. Reality test sensitively where needed. Correct misunderstanding

<p>Identify family concerns about their management of key symptoms or care needs</p>	<p>Ask open questions Preview information Check understanding Clarify Summarize</p>	<p>Consider medication or treatment concerns? Any hygiene issues? Any concerns about walking, moving, transferring? Any concerns about assessing palliative care resources – extra help? Financial issues? Any need for respite? Any concern about a sense of helplessness Promote problem solving Educate as appropriate</p>
<p>Clarify the family's views of what the future holds</p>	<p>Ask circular questions Clarify Restate Summarize Make partnership statements</p>	<p>Are there advanced care directives? Health proxy appointed? Consider cultural or religious concerns Has the place of death been discussed? If at home, who from the family will be providing care? If in the hospital, who will accompany? help? support? Educate as appropriate</p>
<p>Clarify how family members are coping and feeling emotionally</p>	<p>Ask circular questions Ask strategic questions Acknowledge Validate Normalize</p>	<p>Review family functioning as a group, asking specifically about their communication, cohesion and conflict resolution. Identify any members considered to be "at risk" or a concern to others? Discuss future care needs of family or individuals when concern exists. Avoid premature reassurance</p>
<p>Identify family strengths and affirm their level of commitment &amp; mutual support for each other</p>	<p>Ask circular questions Ask strategic &amp; reflexive questions Praise family efforts Acknowledge, legitimize</p>	<p>Review family traditions, mottos, spirituality, cultural norms</p>

<p>Close the family meeting by final review of agreed goals of care and future plans</p>	<p>Summarize Invite questions Acknowledge Make partnership statements Express willingness to help Review next steps</p>	<p>Provide education materials. Clarify future needs, funeral plans Refer those "at risk" to family clinic for further care Consider feedback to patient if they were not present</p>
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