**Approach to Goals of Care Discussion**

*adapted from: EPERC*

**Step 1.** Begin soon after diagnosis of a life-limiting condition

⇒ Physician goal is to develop a broad understanding of the patient’s hopes and goals

⇒ Specific treatment decision follows this understanding

**Step 2.** Be prepared with the facts of the case

**Step 3.** Be prepared to listen, respond to the patient’s feelings, and ask broad questions (not “yes” or “no”)

**Step 3.** Examples of how to have the conversation

⇒ “We have discussed your current condition and that time might be short. With that in mind:

- What are you hoping for now?
- What is important to you?
- What fears or worries do you have about your illness or medical care?
- If you have to choose between living longer and quality of life, how would you approach this balance?
- What sustains you when you face serious challenges in your life?
- Are there any special activities or events that you are looking forward to?

**Step 5.** Common responses invoke family, home, and comfort. If so, restate your understanding.

⇒ What I hear you saying is that you want to be home, comfortable, and hope to survive until your daughter gives birth—

**Step 6.** Recommend a care plan based on the goals, including current treatments, monitoring, planned tests, and medications (which will help meet, or not, the patient’s goals)

⇒ Other issues include future hospitalizations, ICU, resuscitation orders, code status

**Step 7.** Close the meeting, re-stating goals and next steps. Debrief. Discuss with key staff. Document.

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