

Essential Conversations

Creating a Better Illness Experience for Patients and Families at Home



Host and Moderator: Jeffrey Moat, CM

Presenter: Dr. Samantha Winemaker

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Territorial Honouring



The Palliative Care ECHO Project

The Palliative Care ECHO Project is a 5-year national initiative to cultivate communities of practice and establish continuous professional development among health care providers across Canada who care for patients with life-limiting illness.

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Thank You

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Introductions

Host and Moderator

Jeffrey Moat, CM

CEO, Pallium Canada

Presenter

Dr. Samantha Winemaker, BSc(Hon), MD, CCFP(PC)

Palliative Care Physician and Associate Clinical Professor

McMaster University, Department of Family Medicine

Division of Palliative Care

Medical Director Emanuel Hospice

Conflict of Interest

Pallium Canada

- Non-profit
- Partially funded through a contribution by Health Canada
- Generates funds to support operations and R&D from course registration fees and sales of the Pallium Pocketbook

Presenter

- Dr. Samantha Winemaker

Welcome and Reminders

- Please introduce yourself in the chat!
- Your microphones are muted, but there will be time during this session for questions and discussion.
- You are also welcome to use the chat function to ask questions and add comments, but we also encourage you to raise your hand
- This session is being recorded and will be emailed to registrants within the next week.
- Please remember not to disclose any Personal Health Information (PHI) during the session

Essential Conversations

Creating a Better Illness Experience for
Patients and Families at Home

Learning Objectives

- Recognize the home setting as a unique care environment for communication.
- Learn how to assess the readiness of patients and families to engage in open communication about the illness.
- Learn how to empower patients and families to ‘connect the dots’ of their illness.
- Learn how to invite patients and families to ‘future gaze’.

My Office





Getting Ready

- **Who am I meeting?**
 - Age
 - Living arrangements
 - How fresh is the diagnosis
 - Identify other 'red flags'
- **What do they have?**
 - Assess my familiarity with this illness
 - Natural history
 - Main milestones
 - Anticipated hurdles
 - Big decisions
 - Average timeline
- **Where are they at in this illness journey?**
 - Scour the medical records
 - Look for clues
- **What have they been told?**
 - Noncurative
 - Goal of treatment
 - Illness stage
 - Prognosis
 - What to expect
 - Action plans

Case-Based Discussions

Sophia

- A 61 year old woman
- Pancreatic cancer with spread to liver
- Multiple lines of chemo
- Last few encounters with cancer centre have been by phone
- Treatment on hold due to weight loss and functional decline
- Told chemo may resume if she improves or consideration of clinical trial
- Past medical history of anxiety
- Has had pain in past
- Full CODE
- Married to 'Joe', one son 'Phil', she worked in Board of Education in custodial work
- Italian is first language, fluent English

The Care Setting



The Team



Communication – Setting the Stage

- Flatten the power differential
- Introductions
- Seek permission
- Read the room
- *Mindful of scope*

Communication – Time Travel



- **Past History**
 - Illness highlights and lowlights to date
- **Current State**
 - Where are things now?
 - What is your understanding of the current situation?
- **Assess if they can walk two roads**
 - Are you the kind of person who likes to plan for the 'what-ifs'?
 - What if things don't go the way you hope?
 - While we're hoping for the best, can we plan for the rest?

Future Gazing



- **Are they future gazers?**
 - Has your mind every wandered into the future?
 - What is your understanding of the next steps?
 - What's the plan?
 - When it's quiet, or at night, where does your mind drift?
 - Are you the kind of person who wants to talk about the future?
 - Straight up? With sugar?
- **Have they ever asked?**
 - Have you ever asked your doctor about the future?
 - Have you had a chance to ask big questions about what's ahead?
- **What have they been told?**
 - What's your understanding of where that leaves things?
 - What sense do you make of that information?

Getting to the heart of it....

- What would you like to know about the future?
- What weighs heaviest on your mind?
- What are you most worried about?
- What are your expectations?
- Are you scared? Of what?
- Do you feel 'in the dark'?
- Would it help if I sit and listen to what's on your mind?

What most people want to know....

- What to expect
- How things will unfold
- What supports
- Options for place of care
- The timeline

What they need to know.....

- What the next chapter looks like
- What it doesn't look like
- The need for care and caregivers
- This is the best they will be
- Who to call
- Their right to information...the big picture and the long view

Back to Case

Before

- Family worried about speaking openly
- Worried that she is eating less and spending more time in bed
- They don't know how they will ever get her back to the cancer centre
- Maria is scared of pain, so is the family
- Joe and Phil taking shifts on the couch
- Maria not sleeping well, scared to close her eyes



After

- No more elephants in the room
- Palpable relief of tension
- Shifting lanes
 - from 'in the dark' to 'in the know'
- Start to plan moving forward

What if's....

- They don't give permission
- They want the sugar
- They don't want to future gaze

Empowering Patients and Families



- The Waiting Room Revolution
 - www.waitingroomrevolution.com
 - 7 skills to improve the illness experience
 - New website
- Social Media
 - Twitter @sammywinemaker
 - Instagram Sammy.winemaker
 - TikTok @dr.sammywinemaker

Questions and Discussion

Session Wrap Up

- Please fill out the feedback survey following the session! Link has been added into the chat
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Thank You



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