

ICSI Shared Decision-Making Model

The Collaborative Conversation™

Shared Decision-Making and the Translation of Evidence into Practice

A consistent finding from clinical and health services research is the failure to translate research into practice. The translation of evidence into practice can be advanced through the use of shared decision-making since shared decision-making results in evidence being incorporated into patient and clinician consultations.

Shared decision-making (SDM) is a process in which patient and clinicians collaborate to clarify all acceptable options, ensure that the patient is well-informed, and choose a course of care consistent with patient values and preferences and the best available medical evidence. (Minnesota Shared Decision-Making Collaborative [MSDMC], 2011).

Evidence based guidelines may recommend the use of shared decision-making for decisions in instances where the evidence is equivocal, when patient action or inaction (such as medication adherence or lifestyle changes) can impact the potential outcome, or when the evidence does not indicate a single best recommendation.

SDM is a patient-centered approach that involves a conversation between the patient and the clinician. It is ideal to involve caregivers and family members in these conversations as well. Family members and caregivers can participate in discussions, ask questions, hear content the patient may miss, and provide invaluable support in decision follow through. Although only patients and clinicians are specifically mentioned throughout this document for brevity purposes, this does not diminish the importance of caregivers and families in patient-centered care.

Both the patient and the clinician bring expertise to the shared decision-making conversation. Clinicians' expertise includes disease etiology, prognosis, options for treatment including the burden and benefit to the patient, and outcome probabilities. Patients' expertise lies in their knowledge of their risk tolerance, body, priorities, family and financial issues, as well as their daily experience with the condition (adapted from Making Shared Decision-Making a Reality. No decision about me, without me. Coulter, A., Collins, A., The King's Fund 2011).

Treatment options vary in their burden on a patient. SDM offers an opportunity to help the patient select a treatment to which they can adhere. When conversations discussing options occurs, patients and clinicians are actively engaged while considering the attributes and issues of the available options. This empathic approach results in the clinician and patient co-creating a decision and a plan of care (adapted from Montori, V., the Mayo Clinic KER UNIT, April 2015). Decision aids can be supportive of this conversation when they communicate the best available evidence to inform the patient and clinician discussion.

Without a conversation, clinicians may make assumptions about what the patient prefers. This creates the potential for discrepancies between what clinicians assume and what patients want resulting in a "preference misdiagnosis" (adapted from Health Policy Publishing, LLC, May 2013).

Difficulty in initiating a conversation is cited by patients and clinicians as one of the barriers to shared decision-making. To address this impediment, ICSI worked with patients, practicing clinicians, and other stakeholders to develop the Collaborative Conversation™ model for use across the care continuum.

Collaborative Conversation™

A collaborative approach towards decision-making is a fundamental tenet of Shared Decision-Making (SDM). The Collaborative Conversation™ is an inter-professional approach that nurtures relationships, enhances patients' knowledge, skills and confidence as vital participants in their health, and encourages them to manage their health care. Within a Collaborative Conversation™, the perspective is that the patient, rather than the clinician, knows which course of action is most consistent with the patient's values and preferences.

Use of Collaborative Conversation™ elements and tools is even more necessary to support patient, care clinician and team relationships when patients and families are dealing with high stakes or highly charged issues. A diagnosis of a life-limiting illness is one example of such a circumstance.

The overall objective for the Collaborative Conversation™ approach is to create an environment in which the patient, family, and care team work collaboratively to reach and carry out a decision that is consistent with the patient's values and preferences along with the best available evidence. A rote script, completed form or checklist does not constitute this approach. Rather it is a set of skills employed appropriately for the specific situation. These skills need to be used artfully to address all aspects of the person involved in making a decision; cognitive, affective, social and spiritual.

Key communication skills help build the collaborative conversation approach. These skills include: (Adapted from O'Connor, Jacobsen Decisional Conflict: Supporting People Experiencing Uncertainty about Options Affecting their Health [2007], and Bunn H, O'Connor AM, Jacobsen MJ Analyzing decision support and related communication [1998, 2003])

1. Listening skills:

Encourage patient to talk by providing prompts to continue such as *go on, and then?, uh huh*, or by repeating the last thing a person said, *It's confusing*.

Paraphrase content of messages shared by patient to promote exploration, clarify content and to communicate that the person's unique perspective has been heard. The clinician should use their own words rather than just parroting what they heard.

Reflection of feelings usually can be done effectively once trust has been established. Until the clinician feels that trust has been established, short reflections at the same level of intensity expressed by the patient without omitting any of the message's meaning is appropriate. Reflection in this manner communicates that the clinician understands the patient's feelings and may work as a catalyst for further problem solving. For example, the clinician identifies what the person is feeling and responds back in their own words like this: *"So, you're unsure which choice is the best for you."*

Summarize the person's key comments and reflect them back to the patient. The clinician should condense several key comments made by the patient and provide a summary of the situation. This assists the patient in gaining a broader understanding of the situation rather than getting mired down in the details. The most effective times to do this are midway through and at the end of the conversation. An example of this is, *"You and your family have read the information together, discussed the pros and cons, but are having a hard time making a decision because of the risks."*

Perception checks ensure that the clinician accurately understands a patient or family member perspective, and may be used as a summary or reflection. They are used to verify that the clinician is interpreting the message correctly. The clinician can say, *"So you are saying that you're not ready to make a decision at this time. Am I understanding you correctly?"*

2. Questioning Skills:

Open and Closed questions are both used with the emphasis on open questions. Open questions ask for clarification or elaboration and cannot have a yes or no answer. An example would be, *"What else would influence you to choose this?"* Closed questions are appropriate if specific information is required such as, *"Does your daughter support your decision?"*

Other skills such as summarizing, paraphrasing, and reflection of feeling can be used in the questioning process so that the patient doesn't feel pressured by questions.

Verbal tracking, referring back to a topic the patient mentioned earlier, is an important foundational skill (Ivey & Bradford-Ivey). An example of this is the clinician saying, *"You mentioned earlier..."*

3. Information Giving Skills:

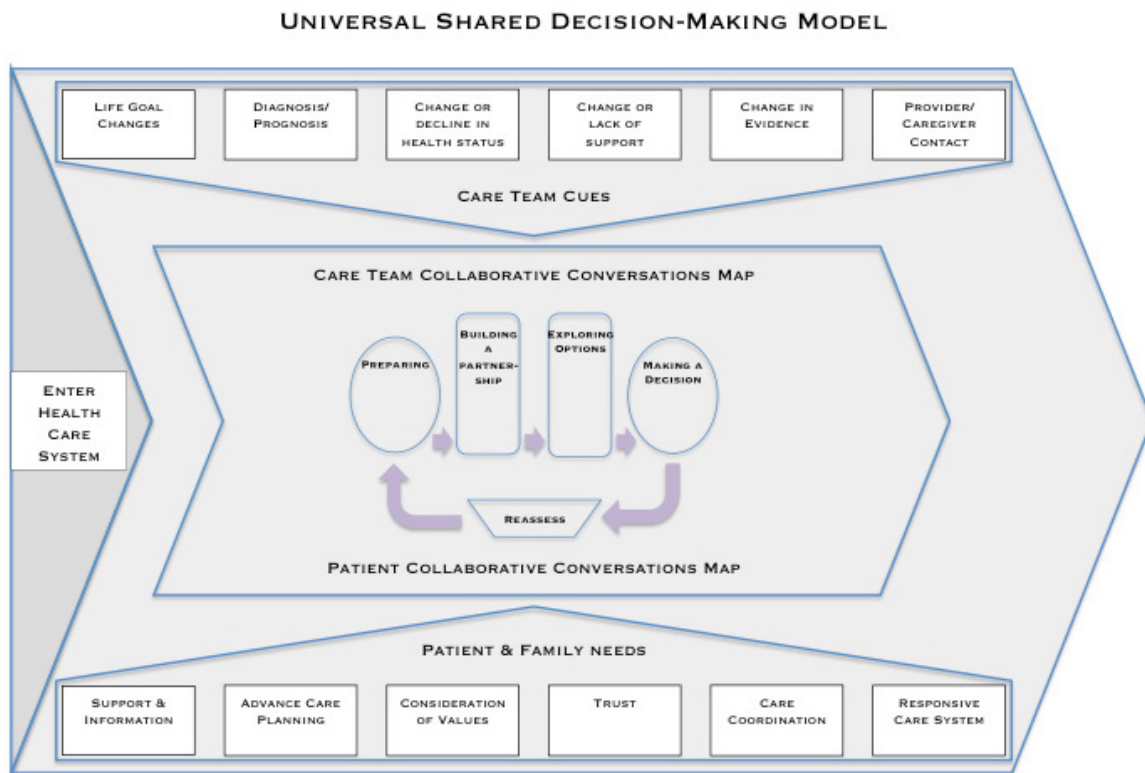
Providing information and **providing feedback** are two methods of information giving. The distinction between providing information and giving advice is important. Information giving allows a clinician to supplement their knowledge and helps to keep the conversation patient centered. Giving advice, on

the other hand, takes the attention away from the patient's unique goals and values and places it on those of the clinician.

Providing information can be sharing facts or responding to questions. An example is, *“If we look at the evidence, the risk is...”* **Providing feedback** gives the patient the clinician's view of the patient's reaction. For instance, the clinician can say, *“You seem to understand the facts and value your daughter's advice.”*

When to Initiate a Collaborative Conversation™

Certain seminal events occur along the care continuum creating especially opportune times for collaborative conversations. More than one of these opportunities may present at a time and they will occur in no specific order.



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Table 1

Cues for the Care Team to Initiate a Collaborative Conversation™:

- Life goal changes: *Patient's priorities change related to things the patient values such as; activities, relationships, possessions, goals and hopes, or things that contribute to the patient's emotional and spiritual well-being.*
- Diagnosis/prognosis changes: *Additional diagnoses, improved or worsening prognosis.*
- Change or decline in health status: *Improving or worsening symptoms, change in performance status or psychological distress.*
- Change or lack of support: *Increase or decrease in caregiver support, change in caregiver, change in caregiver status, change in financial standing, difference between patient and family wishes.*
- Disease progression: *Change in physical or psychological status as a result of the disease progression.*
- Clinician/caregiver contact: *Each contact between the clinician/ caregiver presents an opportunity to reaffirm with the patient that their care plan and the care they are receiving is consistent with their values.*

Patient and Family Needs within a Collaborative Conversation™

- Request for support and information: *Decisional conflict is indicated by, among other things, the patient verbalizing uncertainty or concern about undesired outcomes, expressing concern about choice consistency with personal values, exhibiting behavior such as wavering, delay, preoccupation, distress or tension. Support resources may include healthcare professionals, family, friends, support groups, clergy, and social workers. When patient expresses need for information regarding options and their potential outcomes, the patient should understand the key facts about their options, risks and benefits, and have realistic expectations. The method and pace with which this information is provided to the patient should be appropriate for the patient's capacity at that moment.*
- Advance Care Planning: *With the diagnosis of a life limiting illness, conversations around advance care planning open up. This is an opportune time to expand the scope of the conversation to other types of decisions that will need to be made as a consequence of the diagnosis of a life limiting illness.*
- Consideration of Values: *The personal importance a patient assigns potential outcomes must be respected. If the patient is unclear how to prioritize their preferences, value clarification can be achieved through the use of decision aids. Detailing the benefits and harms of potential outcomes in terms of how they will directly affect the patient, and through collaborative conversations with the clinician.*
- Trust: *The patient must feel confident that their preferences will be communicated to and respected by all caregivers.*
- Care Coordination: *Should the patient require care coordination; this is an opportune time to discuss the other types of care related decisions that need to be made. These decisions will most likely need to be revisited often. Further, the care delivery system must be capable of delivering coordinated care throughout the continuum of care.*
- Responsive Care System: *The care system needs to support the components of patient and family centered care so the patient's values and preferences are incorporated into the care they receive throughout the care continuum.*

The Collaborative Conversation™ Map is the heart of this process. The Collaborative Conversation Map™ can be used as a stand-alone tool that is equally applicable to clinicians and patients as shown in Table 2. Clinicians use the map as a clinical workflow. It helps get the shared decision-making process initiated and provides navigation for the process. Care teams can use the Collaborative Conversation™ to document team best practices and to formalize a common lexicon. Organizations can build fields from the Collaborative Conversation™ Map in electronic medical records to encourage process normalization. Patients use the map to prepare for decision-making, to help guide them through the process and to share critical information with their loved ones.

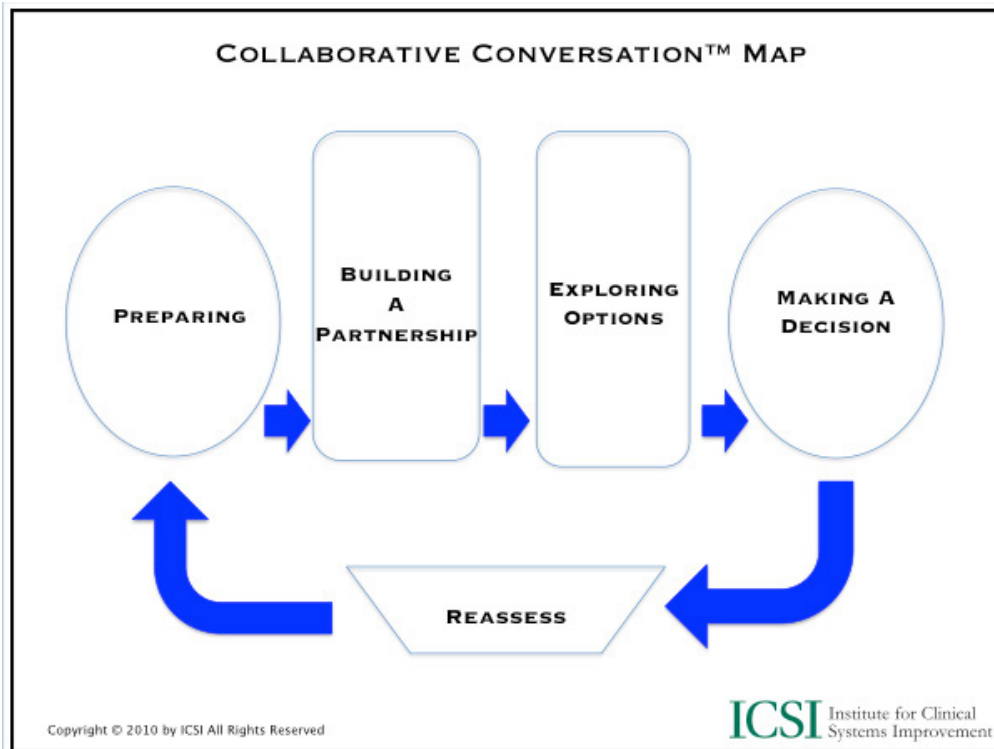


Table 2

Evaluating Shared Decision-Making

It has proven challenging to assess shared decision-making. Measuring shared decision-making remains important for continued adoption of shared Decision-Making as a mechanism for translating evidence into practice, promoting patient centered care, and to understand the impact of shared decision-making on patient experience, outcomes, and revenues. Many assessments exist, but they are often proxy measures.

Two suggested methods for measuring shared Decision-Making are the CollaboRATE tool and the SURE Test. These two tools measure different aspects of shared Decision-Making, as described below.

The **CollaboRATE tool** measures the level of shared Decision-Making in the clinical encounter from the patient’s perspective. It is a brief patient reported measure of shared decision-making. The tools and guidance on their use can be found at <http://www.collaboratescore.org/>.

The **SURE Test** is a brief screening questionnaire the patient uses to assess their readiness and capacity to make a decision or to determine whether they are comfortable with the choice that was made. In other words, it provides information on how likely a patient may be experiencing decisional conflict. If the SURE screening test indicates decisional conflict may exist, the **Decisional Conflict Scale** should be completed in order to assess clinically significant decisional conflict.

Shared decision-making is a useful mechanism for translating evidence into practice. While research on the impacts of shared decision-making continues to grow, there is mounting evidence that both patients and clinicians benefit from SDM. Shared decision-making offers the opportunity to bring evidence and the patient’s values into the patient/clinician discussion of health choices.