



UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA  
HEART INSTITUTE  
INSTITUT DE CARDIOLOGIE  
DE L'UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA

## HEARTWISE WEBINAR SERIES

### Communicating with your health care team:

How good communication can  
lead to positive health care  
experiences and outcomes

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#### Laura Avelar

RN, Patient with Lived Experience, NICU Nurse, The Ottawa Hospital

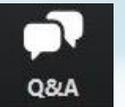
#### Dr. Krystina Lewis

RN, MN, PhD, CCN(C), Registered Nurse, Assistant Professor,  
University of Ottawa

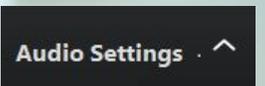
# WELCOME HOUSEKEEPING

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To ask questions through session and  
To notify the presenters and moderators  
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To check your audio settings by clicking  
“Test speaker and microphone”



# How to Have a Conversation with Your Healthcare Team

Laura Avelar

# About Me...

- Laura Avelar
- Woman living with heart disease
- Registered Nurse in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit

*What does being a nurse mean?*

- Communicating clearly with and providing support to patients and their families
- Providing the best possible care to patients



# My Story...

- 2008: Started to experience shortness of breath and pressure in left arm and chest area, so I went to the Emergency Department.
  - Was cleared for a heart attack, but there was an abnormal finding on my ECG - a left branch bundle block
  - Was instructed to follow up with my family doctor (who then sent me to Cardiology)
- 2009: Asked for a second cardiology consult
- 2010: Asked for a third consult
- 2013: Returned to my family doctor (sent for fourth consult)
  - Was told that I was stressed and (possibly depressed), and that I should take time off

# My Story... (cont'd)

- 2014: My symptoms progressed and worsened
  - April: MUGA Scan & Cardiac CT Scan
  - June: Heart Function Clinic (fifth cardiologist)
- Diagnosis...
  - Idiopathic Dilated Cardiomyopathy & Congestive Heart Failure
  - Ejection Fraction: 32%
  - Left ventricle moderately dilated
- September 2014 - hit a wall and stopped working
- Attended Cardiac Rehab
- 2016: Gradually returned to work until full time hours reached

# What I have learned throughout my journey...

- My heart disease is a chronic, lifelong, disease
- Heart disease affects men and women differently
  - Women: smaller hearts, test differently, different symptoms
  - Traditional vs. non-traditional risk factors
- Keeping an open communication with our health care team is important.
- Keep calm, remain curious, but not furious.
- That I know my body best.
- Communication is a key element when developing and maintaining a partnership with our health care team.

# Some Tips & Tricks for Good Communication...

- Remember to prepare for your appointment.
- Take time to prepare your story.
- Be as open as you can about your thoughts, feelings and fears.
- Make a list of your concerns.
- Bring an updated list of your medications.
- Be prepared to ask questions.
- Take notes.
- Bring someone with you.
- It is okay to say you don't understand something.
- Ask questions for clarification.
- At the end of your appointment do a recap of your plan and what was discussed.
- Advocate for yourself.

# Communicating with your health care team:

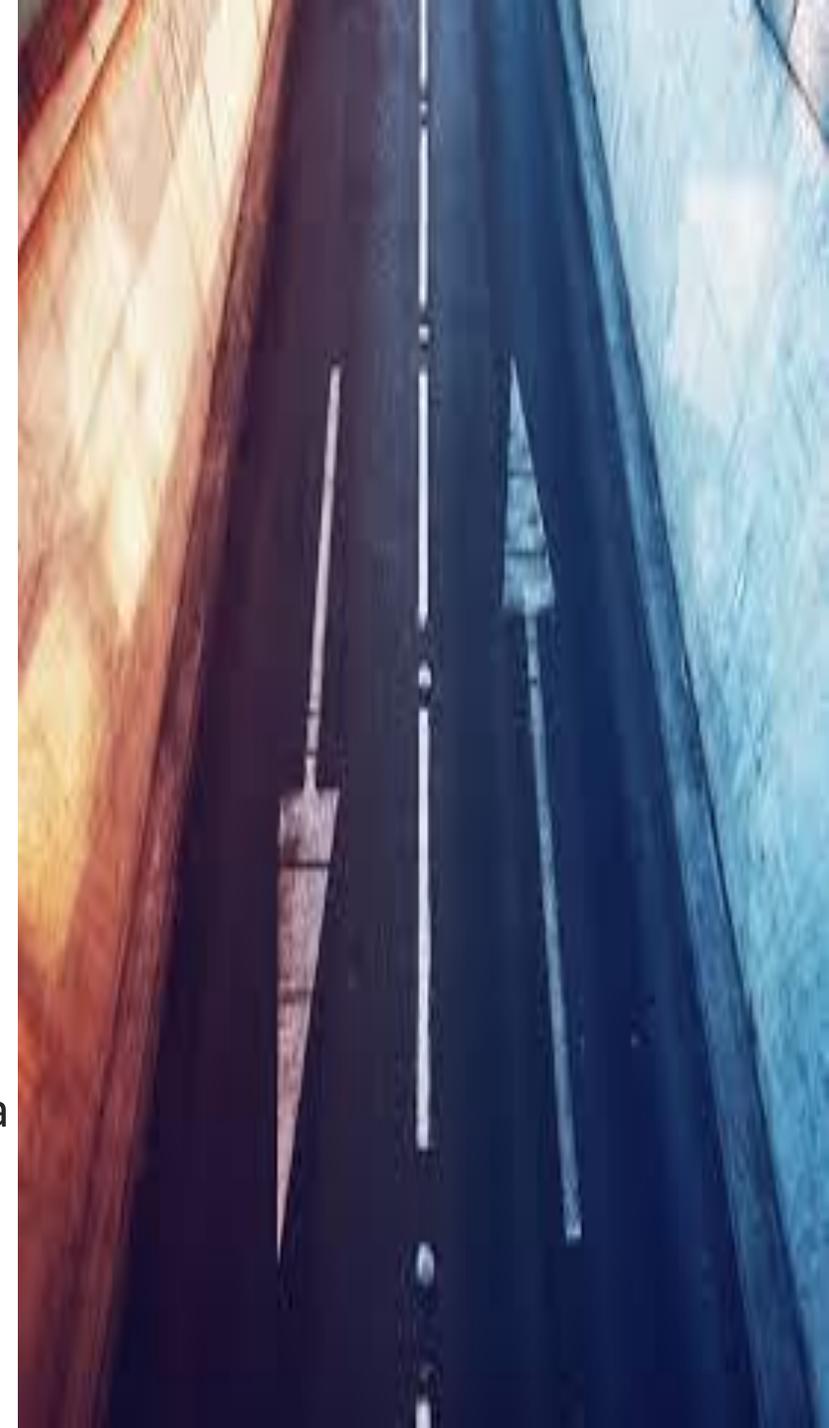
How good communication can lead to  
positive health care  
experiences and outcomes

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Krystina Lewis RN, PhD, CCN(C)

Assistant Professor, School of Nursing, University of Ottawa

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# Outline

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What is good patient-provider communication?

What do we know about the link between good communication and outcomes?

What tools - supported by research - can help us achieve good communication?

What are some additional tips and tricks for good communication?

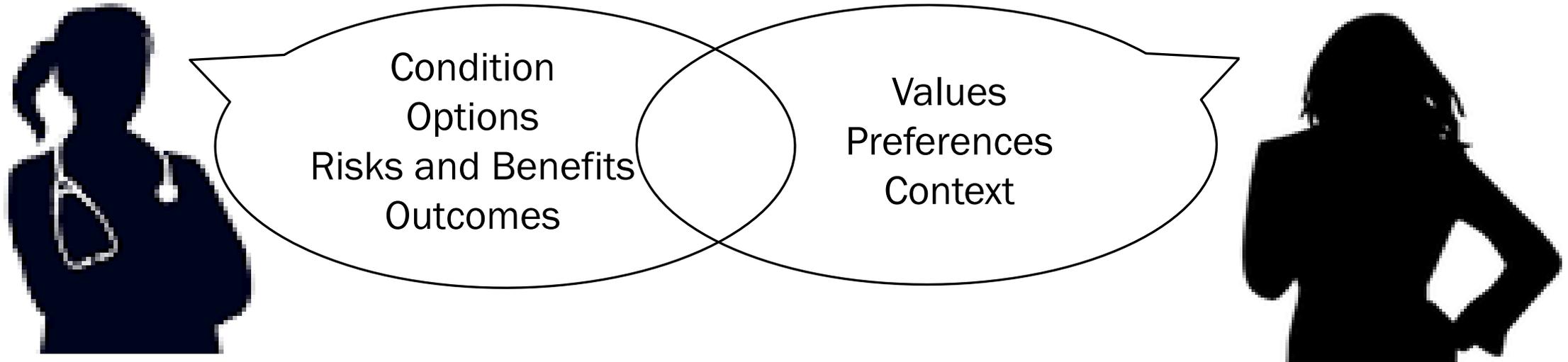
What is good patient-provider communication?

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# Good patient-centered communication: Defined

1. Eliciting and understanding the **patient's perspective**
2. Understanding the patient within their **unique** context
3. Reaching a **shared** understanding of patient conditions and concerns, and the treatments that are aligned with their values.

# Good communication: A shared agenda



*Sharing an agenda depends on:*

- ✓ Patients being informed of the condition, options, risk and benefits, outcomes
- ✓ Health care providers having a clear understanding of patients' values and preferences

# Communication Goals in Healthcare Encounters

- Foster the relationship
- Exchange information
- Make decisions
- Enable disease and treatment-related behaviors
- Respond to emotions
- Manage uncertainty



What do we know about the link between  
**good communication** and **patient outcomes**?

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# Benefits of Good Patient-Provider Communication

- ✓ **Patients are more satisfied**, when health care providers engage in
  - Task-oriented behaviors
  - Affective behaviors
  - Non-verbal behaviors
  
- ✓ **Patients remember, understand, and follow through more**
  
- ✓ **Patients have better health outcomes**
  - Physiologic measures e.g., blood pressure, blood glucose
  - Health status
  - Functional status (levels of distress with illness).

What **tools** - supported by research - can help us achieve good communication?

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# The Tool: Question Prompt Lists

A prepared list of questions for patients and family members to help them identify questions they wish to ask the health care provider.

Nr	Section 1: Heart failure and its impact on daily life
1.	What does heart failure entail?
2.	Is heart failure a serious illness?
3.	Is heart failure a lifelong illness?
4.	What can I do to improve my prognosis?
5.	What can I do to improve my condition?
6.	What is the likely impact of heart failure on my future?
7.	What goals are realistic for the future?
8.	What symptoms might I experience when my condition deteriorates in the future, and what should I do if they occur?
	<b>Section 2: Help and support when the illness deteriorates</b>
9.	Who can I talk to about things that worry or bother me?
10.	Who can my family talk to about things that worry or bother them?
11.	What treatment is available to me when I deteriorate?
12.	What support is available to me if I deteriorate and cannot look after myself?
13.	Can I choose where I want to be cared for when I deteriorate?
14.	Is it possible to be cared for at home when I deteriorate?
15.	What support is available to me if I choose to be cared for at home?
16.	Who can help me decide about my care?

# The Evidence: Question Prompt Lists

- ✓ Patients ask more questions
- ✓ Patients feel more empowered to ask questions
- ✓ Health care providers offer more information
- ✓ Health care providers offer higher quality information
- ✓ No consistent findings regarding
  - knowledge
  - recall
  - anxiety
  - satisfaction
  - consultation time



Source: <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/what-should-i-ask-my-doctor-during-checkup>

# The Tool: Patient Decision Aids

## Inform

- Explicit about the **decision**

- Provide facts about the **options**

- Communicate the odds of **risks and benefits**

- Offer evidence-based, unbiased, and balanced information

## Clarify values

- Help people consider what is most important to them

## Support decision-making

- Guide in steps of deliberation and determination

- Help people participate meaningfully in decision-making

# The Evidence: Patient Decision Aids

Compared to comparators, **patient decision aids** (n=105 randomized controlled trials):

- ✓ Improve **decision quality**

  - higher knowledge

  - more accurate risk perception

  - better match between values & choices

- ✓ Improve the **decision-making process**

  - Less uncertainty about the best course of action

  - Supporting patients to be less passive in decisions

- ✓ Improve **patient-practitioner communication** (n= 10; 9 improved, 1 no difference)

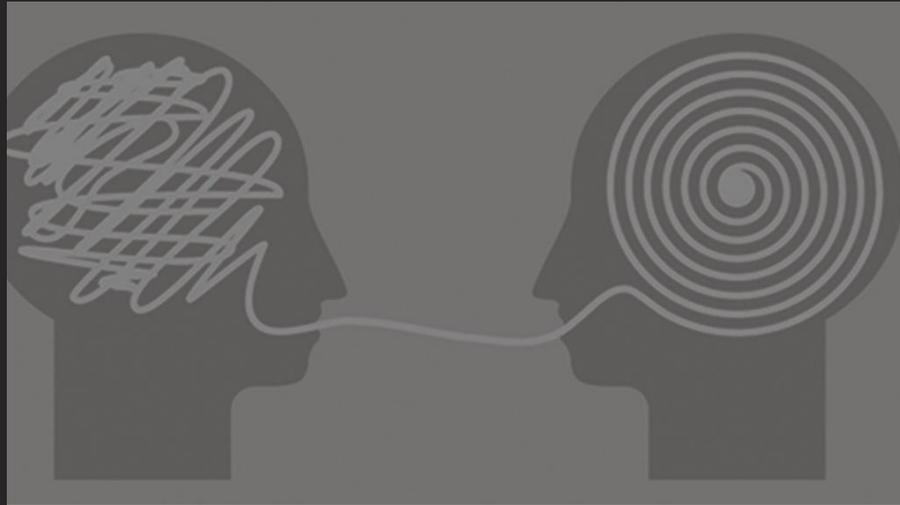
  - Without lengthening the visit (n=10; 2 longer, 8 no difference)

  - No harms

## Additional Tips and Tricks for Good Communication

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# Communicate what is important to you



## What are my goals ?

- *I would like to* \_\_\_\_\_
- *I would like to be able to* \_\_\_\_\_
- *I am hoping for* \_\_\_\_\_
- *I would like to avoid* \_\_\_\_\_

## What are my concerns ?

- *I am concerned about* \_\_\_\_\_
- *I am afraid of* \_\_\_\_\_

## What matters most to me ?

- *It is really important for me to* \_\_\_\_\_

## What brings me joy ?

- *I am really happy/satisfied when/with* \_\_\_\_\_

# Ask 3 Questions

- 1.** What are my options?  
(One option will always be wait and watch)
- 2.** What are the possible benefits and harms of those options?
- 3.** How likely are each of those benefits and harms to happen to me?

# Use Patient Decision Aids

GO TO [GOOGLE.CA](https://www.google.ca)

Search: Patient Decision Aids

Link: <https://decisionaid.ohri.ca/AZinvent.php>

## Patient Decision Aids



[Français](#)

### A to Z Inventory of Decision Aids

**Search** all decision aids:

Go

OR

[Browse](#) an alphabetical listing of decision aids by health topic.

The A to Z Inventory of Decision Aids is designed to help you find a decision aid to meet your needs. It contains up-to-date and available decision aids that meet a [minimal set of criteria](#).

More information about [decision aid developers](#).

You may search for a decision aid using keywords or browse an alphabetical listing.

*Note: Addition of other decision aids to the A to Z inventory is an ongoing process.*

# Ottawa Personal Decision Guide:

For people making health or social decisions

Freely Available:

<https://decisionaid.ohri.ca/decguide.html>

## Ottawa Personal Decision Guide

For People Making Health or Social Decisions



### 1 Clarify your decision.

What decision do you face?

What are your reasons for making this decision?

When do you need to make a choice?

How far along are you with making a choice?

Not thought about it       Close to choosing  
 Thinking about it       Made a choice

### 2 Explore your decision.

**Knowledge**  
List the options and benefits and risks you know.

**Values**  
Rate each benefit and risk using stars (\*) to show how much each one matters to you.

**Certainty**  
Choose the option with the benefits that matter most to you. Avoid the options with the risks that matter most to you.

### 3 Identify your decision making needs.

Adapted from The SURE Test © 2008 O'Connor & Légaré.



**Knowledge**

Do you know the benefits and risks of each option?

Yes     No



**Values**

Are you clear about which benefits and risks matter most to you?

Yes     No



**Support**

Do you have enough support and advice to make a choice?

Yes     No



**Certainty**

Do you feel sure about the best choice for you?

Yes     No


Which option do you prefer?     Option #1     Option #2     Option #3     Unsure



**Support**

Who else is involved?			
Which option do they prefer?			
Is this person pressuring you?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
How can they support you?			

What role do you prefer in making the choice?

Share the decision with...  
 Decide myself after hearing views of...  
 Someone else decides...

# What can *you* do to promote good communication?

Person and family	Health care provider
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Prepare for the visit<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- What do I want to <i>tell</i>?</li><li>- What do I want to <i>ask</i>?</li></ul></li><li>✓ Ask prioritized questions</li><li>✓ Share desired level of involvement</li><li>✓ Share what is most important to you</li><li>✓ Communicate understanding (or lack)</li><li>✓ Bring a trusted person, take notes or ask for resources</li><li>✓ Summarize next steps and action points</li><li>✓ Follow-up</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Ask for input on the agenda</li><li>✓ Invite questions</li><li>✓ Ask about desired level of involvement</li><li>✓ Ask about what is most important</li><li>✓ Verify understanding</li><li>✓ Offer resources</li><li>✓ Summarize next steps and action points</li></ul>

# In Summary

- ✓ Good communication in health care is a shared endeavor
- ✓ Good communication leads to better health outcomes and experiences for patients
- ✓ There are evidence-based tools that can be used **ahead of** and **during** appointments to promote good communication.



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# QUESTIONS?

All sessions will be recorded  
and available on our  
Prevention and Wellness Centre (PWC) website.

**PWC.OTTAWAHEART.CA**

Please email [heartwisewebinar@ottawaheart.ca](mailto:heartwisewebinar@ottawaheart.ca)  
if you have any questions or ideas  
for additional topics.

**THANK YOU FOR JOINING!**