

# MVP for Serious Illness Conversations

## 3 communication skills

### A. Empower

Ask first, and listen

### B. be Explicit

Tell the hard truths

### C. Empathize

Respond to emotion

## 3 step process

### 1. Medical Situation

Seek mutual understanding of:

- New diagnosis
- Progression
- Prognosis
- Treatment options

### 2. Values

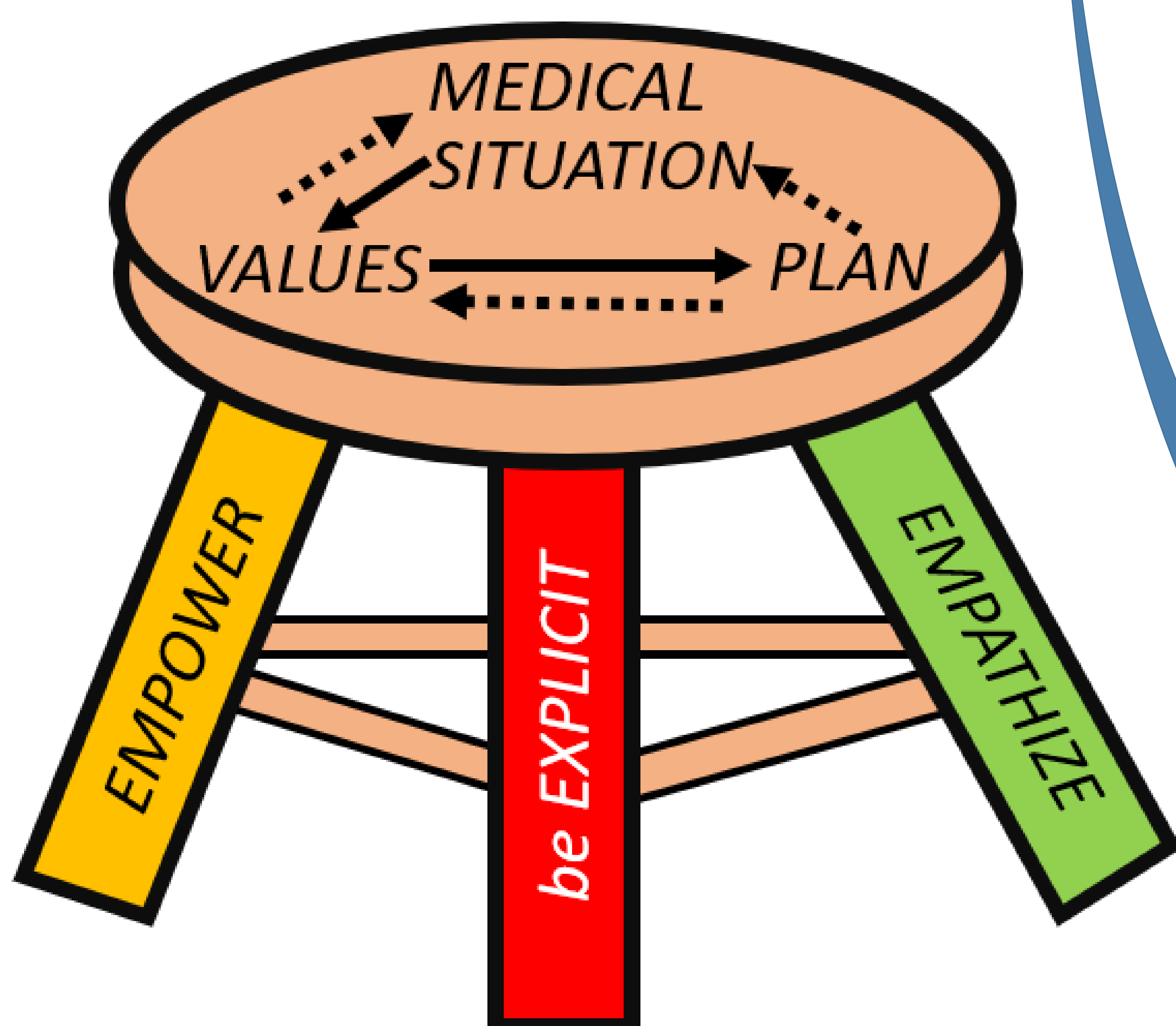
Explore what matters

- Preferences
- Character
- Culture
- Life story

### 3. Plan

Define next steps

- Conversation plan
- Treatment choices
- Code status



# Communication Skill Tips

## 1. Medical Situation

**Agenda:** "I'd like to discuss your medical situation, OK?"

**Ask:** "What do you understand?"

- "May I share my understanding?"

**Tell** (warning shot): "I'm afraid I have some bad news...."

**Tell** (headline): "The treatment isn't working."

- "Your father is dying."

**Empathize:** "I can see this is hard to hear."

- "Can you tell me more about what you're thinking/feeling?"

- "This isn't fair."

## 2. Values

**Agenda:** "Now that you understand, let's explore your Values, OK?"

**Ask:** "Given this situation, what matters most to you?"

- "What are you hoping for? What else are you hoping for? Etc..."

- "Are there things you want to avoid?"

- "Can we explore your wishes if things don't go as you want?"

- "If he could be here, what would he say?"

**Tell:** "Let me see if I get it right: what matters most to you is..."

**Empathize:** "I wish we had the cure you so want and deserve."

- "Your commitment to his dignity is clear and moving."

## 3. Plan

**Agenda:** "Let's talk about how best to honor your Values, OK?"

**Ask:** "May I make a recommendation?"

**Tell:** "Given what you've told me, I recommend..."

- "... that we focus all treatments on your comfort."

- "...that you remain Full Code."

- "...that we take a break, and pick up this tough conversation later."

**Empathize:** "It is an honor to know and work with you."

- "I am with you."