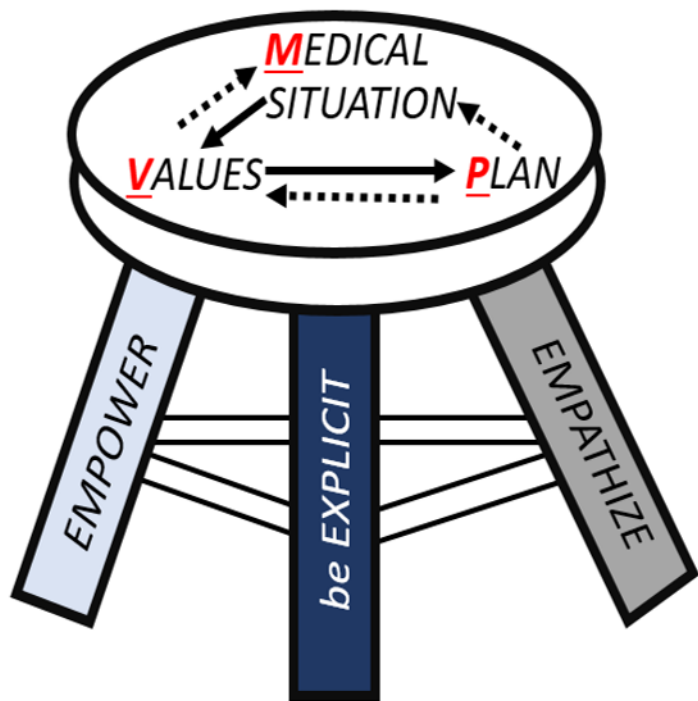


# Advanced Communication Training

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**MVP** is a 3-step sequential, fluid process, supported by 3 core communication skills, to guide any serious illness conversation

The 3 step MVP process rests upon 3 core communication skills, used continuously throughout every serious illness conversation

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**1. Medical Situation**

Seek mutual understanding of:

- Illness(es)
- Prognoses
- Treatment options

**2. Values**

Explore patient & family:

- Priorities
- Hopes
- Worries
- Preferences

**3. Plan**

Define goal-concordant care

- Conversation plan
- Treatment plan

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**A. Empower**

- Listen
- Ask first
- Calibrate

**B. be Explicit**

- Share the facts
- Precisely
  - Concisely

**C. Empathize**

- Emotion
- Anticipate & Recognize
  - Validate & Explore

## Medical Situation

- I'd like to discuss some difficult information with you, okay?
- Before I share the details, it will help me to know what you understand about the disease.
- I'm afraid I have some bad news...
- The treatment isn't working, and another round of therapy probably won't help you live longer or feel better.
- I can see this is hard to hear.
- I wish we had better options.

## Values

- Given your medical situation, what matters most to you? What are you hoping for?
- Let me see if I understand. You value ... (ex. *quality over length of life...OR...doing everything to live another day...OR...*).
- Did I hear you right?
- I appreciate how much you want to be here for your family.
- Who is your backup (HCP) if you can't speak for yourself?

## Plan

- Now that I understand your values, I'd like to offer a recommendation, okay?
- Given what you've told me, I recommend that we...(ex. *take resuscitation off the table, and treat your symptoms at home...OR...offer a time-limited ventilator trial...OR...*).
- Yes, of course! Anyone would find this discussion difficult.
- Does my recommendation make sense? What do you think?
- OK, now let's complete 2 forms (HCP, POLST) to be sure your medical team knows and honors your wishes, okay?
- It's a privilege to work with you. You've done a great job taking care of yourself, and your family.

## MORE TIPS & EXAMPLES\*

### 1. Medical Situation

#### Empower

- I'd like to discuss your Medical Situation with you, OK?
- Is there anyone else you'd like to join this conversation?
- What do you understand about your medical situation?
- May I share my understanding?
- Do you like the basics or the details?
- I've just shared a lot of information with you; what do you understand now?

#### Be Explicit

##### **(Ask) Agenda:**

- I'd like to discuss what's going on with your disease, OK?

##### **(Tell) Warning shot:**

- I'm afraid I have some bad news.

##### **(Tell) Headlines:**

- You have widespread and aggressive cancer.
- Your heart is extremely weak, and it will not heal.
- She has suffered severe and irreversible brain damage.
- Your father is dying.
- The treatment is not working; the cancer is spreading.

#### Empathize

- I can see this is hard to hear.
- I can only imagine how upsetting this is.
- Can you tell me how you're feeling about this tough news?
- You're right, this sucks.
- I wish I had a treatment that worked.
- I hear that you want me to focus on the facts, not your emotions. I can do that.

\*Tips & Examples demonstrate the 3 core communication skills applied throughout each of the 3 MVP steps. Note that a single comment may utilize 2 or all 3 skills. For example, a "Warning shot" seeks assent [Empowers], prepares the patient for emotion [Empathizes], and although non-specific, expresses the seriousness of the information [is Explicit] to be shared.

## MORE TIPS & EXAMPLES

### 2. Values

#### Empower

- Now that you understand the Medical Situation, let's explore your Values, OK? (agenda-setting)
- Given what's going on medically...
- What is most important to you now?
- Which is more important to you, length or quality of life?
- What are your hopes? Worries? Fears?
- What worries you most?
- Who are your people? Your supports?
- When you think about dying, what concerns you?
- Does faith, religion, or spirituality play a role in your life?
- What questions do you have?
- Are there things you want to avoid?

#### Be Explicit

Let me see if I get you right, okay?

- You want us to do everything possible to live longer, even if it is uncomfortable and keeps you in the ICU. Right?
- She would never have allowed this machine to keep her alive, and would tell us to stop it, and let her die. Correct?
- You want to be out of the hospital from here forward, and focus all efforts on your well-being at home, until you die. Accurate?

#### Empathize

- I wish we had the cure you so want and deserve.
- Your values clearly reflect your love for your kids. They are lucky to have you in their lives.
- Can you say more about what you're thinking?
- Yes, you *are* between a rock and a hard place.
- You are managing this unbearable situation with such grace!
- Your commitment to your father's dignity and comfort is so clear, and so moving.

## MORE TIPS & EXAMPLES

### 3. Plan

#### Empower

- Now let's talk about how best to honor your Values, by defining a Plan, OK?
- May I make a recommendation?
- Does this make sense?
- It seems like my recommendation was not what you were expecting, can you tell me more?

#### Be Explicit

- Given what you've told me, I recommend...  
...that we take a break now, and pick up this tough conversation later.  
...that we focus all treatments on your comfort, at home.  
...that she remain Full Code for now.
- Would you like to revisit the Medical situation to clarify your question about CPR?
- It sounds like you've heard enough for today. How about if we resume this conversation tomorrow?
- I'm concerned that your wish for X will compromise your preference for Y. So I would like to revisit your Values in this tough medical situation, okay?

#### Empathize

- I am pleased we have defined the care plan that makes the most sense for you.
- It is such an honor to know and work with you.
- I am moved by your commitment to your mother's dignity.
- You are handling this impossible situation with impressive clarity, kindness, and wisdom.
- I am with you.

Many thanks to ACT Founding Sponsors,  
Mr. Jerald & Mrs. Clare Rotenberg