How to Help Patients Make Value-Based Medical Decisions: Promoting Adaptive Coping and Prognostic Awareness (SA543)

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Objectives

• Discuss the role of the outpatient palliative care clinician as supportive psychotherapist.

• Identify and practice clinical skills from the positive psychology literature to help patients build resilience and adaptive coping in the face of serious illnesses.

• Discuss techniques to enable patients to tolerate greater discussion of prognosis and the possibility of death.

Continuity outpatient palliative care practice offers an opportunity for palliative care clinicians to support patients longitudinally through the process of medical decision-making. This session will discuss how clinicians can support patients in both living well and engaging in values-based medical decision-making using techniques from supportive psychotherapy within a medical framework. We will explore how palliative care clinicians can partner with the patient to engage in a fully emotional, encouraging, and supportive relationship. Participants will learn and practice techniques to reinforce patients’ healthy and adaptive patterns of thought and behavior in order to build resilience in the face of illness and maintain quality of life. We will also discuss how to help patients develop a deeper awareness of and ability to tolerate discussions of clinical decline and the possibility of death. By building prognostic awareness and resilience, clinicians enable patients to be more fully informed and cope more effectively when making decisions about medical treatment.