


Communicating with your  
Healthcare Team




## BLOOD CANCER CONFERENCES (BCC)

To view the entire **'Save the Date'** BCC schedule, visit [www.LLS.org/bcc](http://www.LLS.org/bcc).

Northern California Blood Cancer Conference 2018	Saturday, January 27, 2018
Florida Blood Cancer Conference 2018	Saturday, February 24, 2018
Southern California Blood Cancer Conference 2018	Saturday, March 3, 2018

*Program will begin shortly*


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## Welcome & Introductions

Alison Mayer Sachs' slides are available  
for download at  
[www.LLS.org/programs](http://www.LLS.org/programs).



## Communicating with your Healthcare Team



LEUKEMIA &  
LYMPHOMA  
SOCIETY™

## Communicating with your Healthcare Team

**Alison Mayer Sachs, MSW, CSW, OSW-C**

Director, Community Outreach & Cancer Support Services  
Eisenhower Lucy Curci Cancer Center at Eisenhower Medical Center  
Rancho Mirage, CA



## Communicating with your Healthcare Team

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## How Much Do We Really Want To Know?



## Communication

No matter how good a practitioner your doctor may be, if you don't understand what he tells you, or if he doesn't listen or clearly answer your questions, your care will not be the best it can be.

Knowledgeable, active patients are more likely to do well and less likely to get severely depressed than passive ones. They can become active participants in their care and active partners with their physicians, rather than remaining passive consumers.

Harold Glucksburg, MD. *Cancer Care, A Personal Guide*



## Effective Patient-Doctor Communications

A patient who is a good communicator:

- Will be mindful of the doctor's limited time.
- Will be concise in her communication.
- Will ask the meaning of words and concepts she does not understand.
- If interrupted, will ask the doctor to stop and listen to her.



Effective Patient-Doctor Communications [www.about.com](http://www.about.com), Trish Torrey, 11/2007

## Effective Patient-Doctor Communications (continued)

A doctor or practitioner who is a good communicator:

- Has respect for her patient.
- Has the ability to share information in terms her patients can understand .
- Doesn't interrupt or stereotype her patients.
- Has the ability to effectively manage patients' expectations.

Effective Patient-Doctor Communications [www.about.com](http://www.about.com), Trish Torrey, 11/2007

## COMMUNICATION

- Good communication between patients, family caregivers, and the health care team is very important in cancer care.
- Patients with cancer have special communication needs.
- Some patients and families want a lot of information and choose to make decisions about care. Other do not.

## COMMUNICATION

- Communication is important at different points during cancer care
- End-of life discussions with the health care team may lead to fewer procedures and better quality of life.

## Taking Control of Your Medical Care

- Be a "self advocate"
- What are you looking for in a provider?
- Don't make hasty treatment decisions.
- When seeing a new physician, surgeon, or specialist, ask the scheduler how long you'll have with the doctor.

Guthrie, Catherine. How to Train Your Doctor, www.oprah.com

## Taking Control of Your Medical Care

- Turn a three-ring binder into your healthcare journal.
- Go to every appointment with a smart friend or family member.



Guthrie, Catherine. How to Train Your Doctor

# Tips to make the most of Your Appointment

- Write down a list of questions and concerns.....prioritize!
- Take notes about what your doctor says, or ask the person with you to do so.
- Learn how to access your medical records, so you can keep track of test results, diagnoses, treatment plans and medications.
- Ask for your doctor's contact information and their preferred method of communication.
- Ask how the office runs.
- Ask who the different members of your health care team are and what they do.



NIH: Talking With Your Doctor

## QUESTIONS TO ASK



### ***When you're told you have cancer:***

1. Exactly what kind of cancer do I have?
2. How do I get a copy of my pathology report?
3. Where is the cancer located?
4. Has the cancer spread beyond where it started?
5. What's the cancer's stage? What does that mean?
6. How does this affect my treatment options and long-term outcome (prognosis)?
7. What are my chances of survival, based on my cancer as you see it?
8. How much experience do you have treating this type of cancer?
9. Will I need other tests before we can decide on treatment?
10. What are my treatment choices?
11. What treatment do you recommend and why?
12. What's the goal of my treatment?
13. Should I think about genetic testing?
14. Should I get a second opinion? How do I do that?
15. Should I think about taking part in a clinical trial?

## Questions to Ask

### ***When deciding on a treatment plan:***

1. What are the chances the cancer will come back after this treatment?
2. What would we do if the treatment doesn't work or if the cancer comes back?
3. Will I be able to have children after treatment?
4. How much will I have to pay for treatment? Will my insurance cover any of it?
5. How long will treatment last? What will it involve?
6. Where will treatment be done?
7. What risks and side effects should I expect?
8. What can I do to reduce the side effects of the treatment?
9. How will treatment affect my daily activities?
10. Will I be able to work during treatment?
11. Will I lose my hair? If so, what can I do about it?
12. Will the treatment hurt?
13. Will I have any scars?



## Questions to Ask

### ***Before treatment:***

1. What should I do to get ready for treatment?
2. Will I need blood transfusions?
3. Should I change what I eat or make other lifestyle changes?

### ***During treatment:***

1. How will we know if the treatment is working?
2. Is there anything I can do to help manage side effects?
3. What symptoms or side effects should I tell you about right away?
4. How can I reach you on nights, holidays, or weekends?
5. Do I need to change what I eat during treatment?
6. Are there any limits on what I can do?
7. What kind of exercise should I do, and how often?
8. Can you suggest a mental health professional I can see if I start to feel overwhelmed, depressed, or distressed?
9. Will I need special tests, such as imaging scans or blood tests, and how often?



## Questions to Ask

### ***After treatment:***

1. Do I need a special diet after treatment?
2. Are there any limits on what I can do?
3. What kind of exercise should I do now?
4. What type of follow-up will I need after treatment?
5. How often will I need to have follow-up exams and imaging tests?
6. What blood tests will I need?
7. How will I know if the cancer has come back? What should I watch for?
8. What are my options if the cancer comes back?



## Questions to Ask



Along with the sample questions I've shared, think of the specific questions you and/or your loved ones may have. For instance, you might need to know more about how long it will take to recover from surgery so you can plan your work schedule. Or, you may need to ask about insurance coverage or how you can get help paying for treatment.

Questions to Ask My Doctor About My Cancer, American Cancer Society, 2013

# Take Action!

Many of us have a hard time talking frankly with our doctors and other people on our health care team. Some of us grew up in a time when patients didn't ask a lot of questions or tell doctors what they wanted and expected. Today, we encourage patients to speak up and take a very active role in their own healthcare.

## As a Patient, you have:

- A right to have a voice in your treatment
- A right to have your questions answered

Asking questions and talking honestly about what **you** need and expect helps build a strong relationship with your health care team.



LLS: Getting the Best Health care at Any Age

# Talking with your Treatment Team

Types of personal information that may be helpful to your doctor:

- Your occupation and the degree of physical exertion or mental stress it involves.
- Close relatives who have had cancer and what type of cancer they had.
- An idea of how much you know about cancer and its treatment.
- The degree to which you are affected by family or financial problems.
- Your hobbies and other interests.
- Your goals regarding your quality of life during and after treatment.
- Whether you have children or plan to have children.

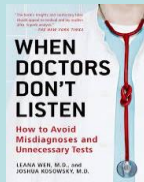
Teamwork: The Cancer Patient's Guide to Talking With Your Doctor: NCCS, 2004

# Teamwork Barriers

## Patient Barriers



## Physician/Treatment Team Barriers



*James Legan, MD, a Great Falls, Mont.-based internist*

"I think it has more to do with nonverbal communication rather than actually what is said. And that would be to appear indifferent, distracted and not listen when spending time with your patient."



## Saying and Hearing: Tips For Understanding Your Doctor

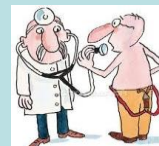
- Use "I" statements.



- Be assertive.



- If something is unclear, try repeating it back to your doctor.



CancerCare: "Doctor, can we Talk?" Tips for Communicating with Your Health Care Team. Feb., 2017

## It's All About the Quality of **YOUR** Life

*"The relationship you have with your health care team can make a big difference in how you cope with these challenges. Research shows that people who have good communication with their health care team are more satisfied with their medical care than those who do not. They also tend to fare better emotionally and better manage symptoms such as treatment side effects and pain."*



**Sarah Paul, LMSW**  
Oncology Social Worker, CancerCare

## Communication

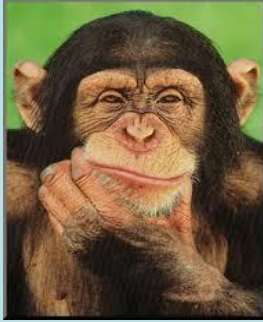
*With communication comes understanding and clarity;  
With understanding, fear diminishes;  
In the absence of fear, hope emerges;  
And in the presence of hope, anything is possible.*

Ellen Stovall

Past President & CEO, National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship



Hmmmmmm.....!  
Questions?



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LEUKEMIA &  
LYMPHOMA  
SOCIETY

## Q&A Session

**Ask a question by phone:**

- Press star (\*) then the number 1 on your keypad.

**Ask a question by web:**

- Click "Ask a question"
- Type your question
- Click "Submit"

Due to time constraints, we can only take one question per person. Once you've asked your question, the operator will transfer you back into the audience line.



## The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society Offers:

- **Information Resource Center:** Information Specialists, who are master's level oncology professionals, are available to help cancer survivors navigate the best route from diagnosis through treatment, clinical trials and survivorship.

➤ **EMAIL:** [infocenter@LLS.org](mailto:infocenter@LLS.org)

➤ **TOLL-FREE PHONE:** 1-800-955-4572



- **Free Education Booklets:**

➤ [www.LLS.org/booklets](http://www.LLS.org/booklets)

- **Free Telephone/Web Programs:**

➤ [www.LLS.org/programs](http://www.LLS.org/programs)



- **Live, weekly Online Chats:**

➤ [www.LLS.org/chat](http://www.LLS.org/chat)



## The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society Offers:

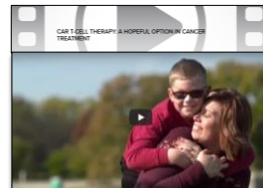
- **Support Resources:** LLS Community, discussion boards, blogs, support groups, financial assistance and more: [www.LLS.org/support](http://www.LLS.org/support)

- **NEW LLS Podcast, *The Bloodline with LLS!*** Listen in as experts and patients guide listeners in understanding diagnosis, treatment, and resources available to blood cancer patients. [www.thebloodline.org](http://www.thebloodline.org)

- **Education Video:** Free education videos about survivorship, treatment, disease updates and other topics: [www.LLS.org/educationvideos](http://www.LLS.org/educationvideos)

- **Patti Robinson Kaufmann First Connection Program:** Peer-to-peer program that matches newly diagnosed patients and their families: [www.LLS.org/firstconnection](http://www.LLS.org/firstconnection)

- **What to ask:** Questions to ask your treatment team: [www.LLS.org/whattoask](http://www.LLS.org/whattoask)





**THANK  
YOU FOR  
PARTICIPATING!**

**We have one goal:  
A world without  
blood cancers**