

# Teach Back Method

## What Is Teach-back?

- A way to make sure you—the health care provider—explained information clearly; it is not a test or quiz of patients.
- Asking a patient (or family member) to explain—in their own words—what they need to know or do, in a caring way.
- A way to check for understanding and, if needed, re-explain and check again.
- A research-based health literacy intervention that promotes adherence, quality, and patient safety.

## Tips for better communication:

- Acknowledge the complexity of the patient's medical condition
- Speak slowly and avoid using medical jargon
- Listen actively and provide information in small segments
- Pause to allow patient/family participation
- Periodically check with your patient/family for understanding
- Use decision aids and other resources to help comprehension

VHA Choosing Wisely—Hypoglycemia Safety Initiative  
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## Shared Decision Making

When more than one treatment option exists or the risk vs. benefit for treatment is not well established based on the evidence, it's critical to engage the patient in creating the treatment plan. This is especially important for sustained adherence.

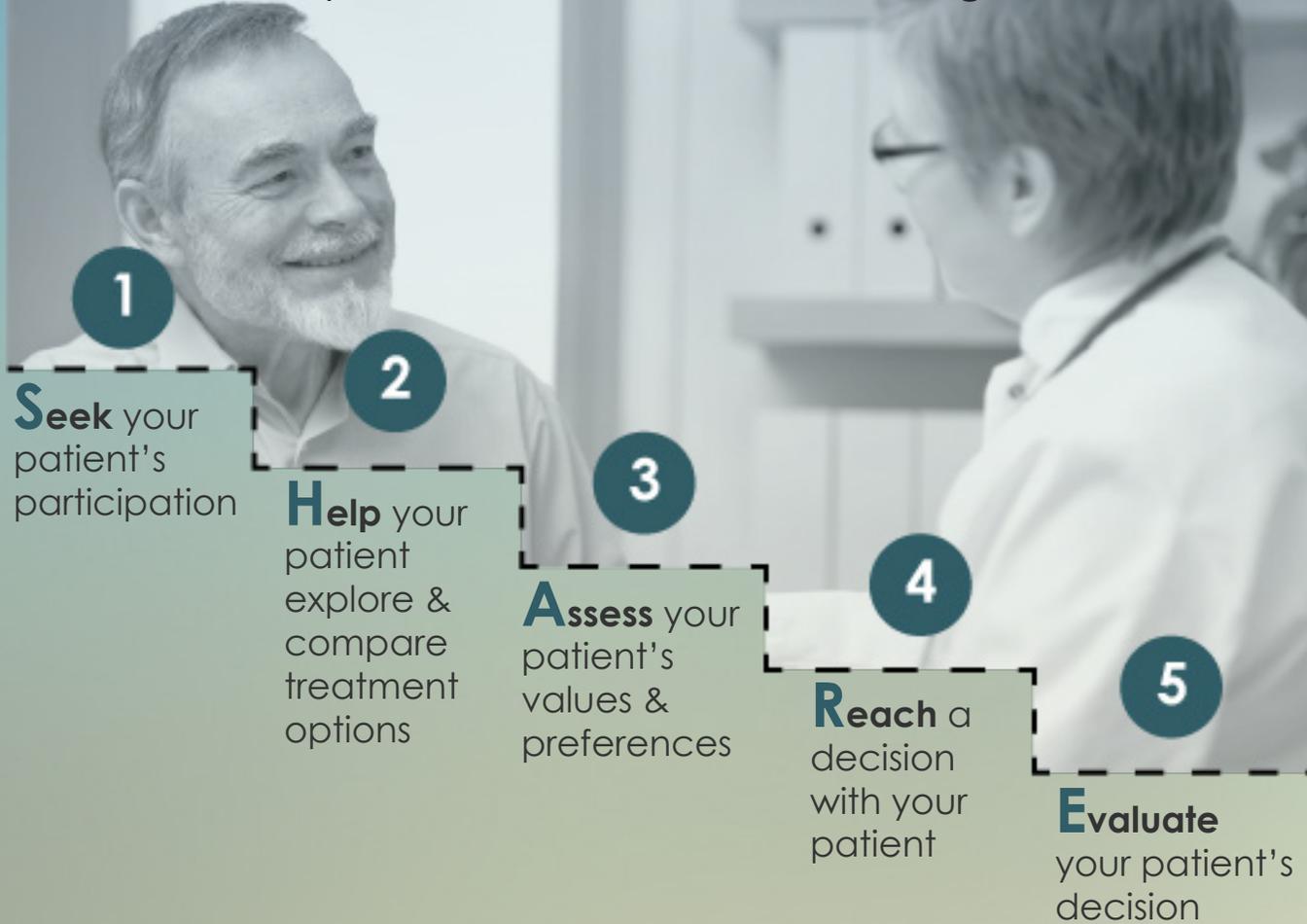
Shared decision making occurs when a health care provider/team and a patient work together to make a health care decision that is best for the patient.

The optimal decision takes into account evidence-based information about available options, the provider's knowledge and experience, and the patient's values and preferences.

Both health care professionals and patients benefit from using shared decision making.

# The SHARE Approach

## 5 Essential Steps of Shared Decision Making



### Step 1: Seek your patient's participation

Communicate that a choice exists and invite your patient to be involved in decisions.

Patients have a right to understand their treatment options. They may choose not to participate, but try to engage them in their health care decisions whenever possible.

Try saying, "Now that we have identified the problem, it's time for us to think about what to do next. Is it okay to discuss some treatment options?"

### Step 2: Help your patient explore and compare treatment options

Discuss the benefits and harms of each option.

Many health care decisions have multiple treatment options, including the option of no care. Often no single option is clearly superior. Use evidence-based decision making resources to compare the treatment options.

Try saying, "What have you read about treatments for [condition]?"

### Step 3: Assess your patient's values and preferences

Take into account what matters most to your patient.

An optimal decision is one that takes into account patient values and treatment goals.

Try saying, "As you think about your options, what's important to you?" or "When you think about the possible risks, what matters most to you?"

### Step 4: Reach a decision with your patient

Decide together on the best option and arrange for a follow up appointment.

Guide your patient to express what matters the most to him or her in deciding the best treatment option. When your patient is ready, he or she will make a decision. Your patient may also choose to delegate the decision to someone else.

Try saying, "What additional questions do you have for me to help you make your decision?"

### Step 5: Evaluate your patient's decision

Support your patient so the treatment decision has a positive impact on health outcomes.

For many decisions, particularly those related to the management of a chronic illness, decisions can and should be revisited after a trial period.

Try saying, "Can we talk next [appropriate time frame] to see how you are doing?"