Shared Decision Making Series

The American Geriatrics Society advises physicians and patients to refrain from using benzodiazepines as first-line treatment for insomnia in older adults. To this end, engaging in a shared decision making process with patients will encourage a collaborative process that allows both sides to take into account the evidence as well as the patient's values and preferences. Below are some steps that have been suggested as a way to engage patients in this process.



1. Assist patient in evaluating options based on their goals and concerns

Patients may not be comfortable raising their personal goals and concerns for treatment. By actively inquiring, you are giving them permission to speak about what is important to them. Once you have elicited this information, you can assist them in evaluating their options based on their preferences.

Sample language:

"Just as people are different, no one decision is right for everyone. As you think about your options, what's important to you?"

OR

"People have different goals and concerns. As you think about your options, what's important to you?

For example, some people...while other people..."

2. Facilitate deliberation and decision making

Patients may not be ready to make a decision immediately. Probing for what else they need to know or do before making the decision can be helpful. If they are ready to decide, you can help facilitate a final decision.

Sample language:

"Considering what we've discussed, do you have a preference about the direction we take?"

"You have time to think things over."

"Do you want to think about this decision with anyone else, someone who might be affected by the decision, someone who might help you sort things out?

"Is there any more information you need?"

"What's the hardest part about deciding?"

"From what I hear you saying, here's what I'd suggest...how does that sound to you?"

3. Assist with implementation

Close the conversation by laying out the next steps for the patient.

Sample language:

"Let's take a moment to talk about next steps."