

# Having Conversations with Family, Friends & Professionals

## COMMUNICATING WITH FAMILY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

- Follow the wishes of the person you are caring - even when it's difficult or not what you want; it is their life
- Consider how to streamline communication with family and friends during difficult times - email groups or apps can be useful

## WORKING WITH PROFESSIONALS - Things to Remember

- **The family doctor serves as the main contact, for care**
- Doctors, nurses and other professionals usually have hundreds of patients and may need to be reminded of the specifics of your situation.
- Depending on illness, you may have people in & out of home or the person you are caring for may be going out for care appointments
- The person you are caring for may have multiple health issues that are dealt with by different doctors or professionals who specialize in specific issues or particular areas of the body
- All professionals might not have access to the same notes/results in their medical files
- **Keep a list of all the professionals with whom the person you are caring for is engaged.**

## WHAT DO PROFESSIONALS NEED TO KNOW?

- Tell them the **things that are most important to you and the person you are caring for**. These are often called the plan of care or care plan goals (such as loves to eat, is an artist, loves to talk, etc.)
  - i.e. the person you are caring for wants to be as alert as possible to play with grandchildren Knowing this can help professionals to suggest management of interventions and medications.
- **Any changes in behavior or abilities** since the last visit with this person. Let professionals decide if it is important.
- **Be as honest as possible** about symptoms and behaviors with professionals so that they can accurately support you and the person you are caring for.
- **Tell them if you are having difficulty with caregiving or you need more help.**

## HOW TO PREPARE FOR A MEDICAL APPOINTMENT

- Keep a journal, or notes on your phone, to **record changes in physical or cognitive functioning**
- Remember that appointments are usually **time limited**.
- Write notes and questions and **prioritize the most important things you want to discuss**.
- It can feel that as a patient or caregiver there are lots of appointments. It **may have been months since the last visit with this professional**. Think about what has changed since the last time.
- Consider the **professional's specialty** to consider what is important to discuss.
- Bring a current list of all medications being taken to all appointments

## ACCESS TO MEDICAL FILES BY CAREGIVERS

- If you require this, be prepared you may need to **the consent of the person you are caring for** to release information to each professional.

## Resources - Click on the links & logos below

- Communication App for families - [www.Caringbridge.org](http://www.Caringbridge.org)
- Privacy Issues: <https://www.changefoundation.ca/caregiver-privacy-consent-report/>