

LISTENING QUESTIONS

When you are listening, and not problem solving, the person you are with can express ideas and find inner strength. Guide them toward the goal of living well. Being listened to can reduce fear and pain.

Simple beginning questions:

1. What has your doctor told you about your condition?
2. Do you know anyone else who has gone through this?
3. How have you dealt with difficult times before?

For a healthy adult, or adult with new, serious acute illness:

- Who would you want to make decisions if you couldn't?
- What would be the goals of treatment if you permanently lost the ability to know who you were, who you were with, or where you were?
- What functions are most important to you? Walking, Talking, Laughing, Control of your body functions?
- Do you have any religious, personal or cultural view that would affect treatment choices?

For adults with incurable, progressive illnesses:

- Same issues as Healthy Adult, above, and
- What would be the benefits of initiating (and of forgoing) an available treatment? And the burdens of initiating or forgoing that treatment?
- What does comfort care mean to you?

For adults who may die in the next 12 months:

- Same issues as adult with incurable illness, above, and
- What would you like to do to guarantee or avoid possibilities such as CPR, hospitalization, nutritional support, comfort care and life closure decisions?
- In what way do you feel you could make this time meaningful to you?
- What fears or worries do you have about your illness, medical care or special needs?
- Who or what sustains you when you face serious challenges in life? For instance, religious, cultural or personal beliefs?

*Last three questions are from the "Living Well Structured Interview"
Other questions adapted from Dr. Menkin and Gunderson Lutheran's
Respecting Choices Handouts, see their websites.*