Case Studies

Dr David Waterman

Consultant in Palliative Medicine

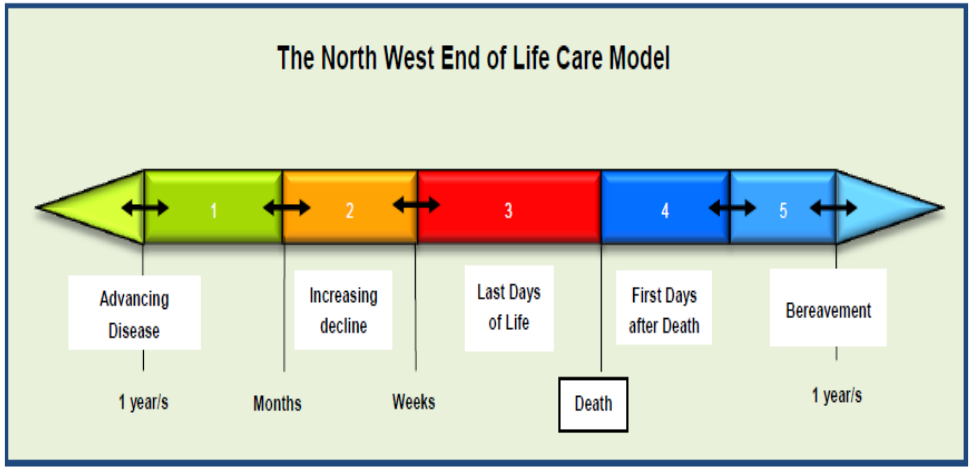
Stockport NHS Foundation Trust

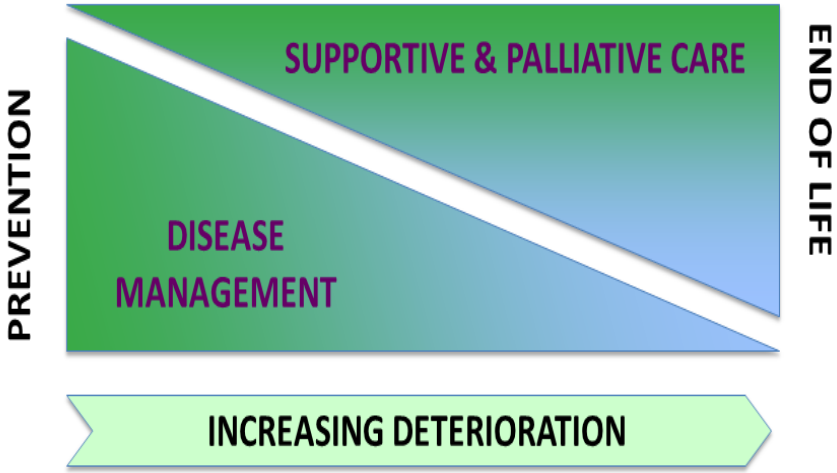
Palliative Care Lead GMEC SCN

Overview

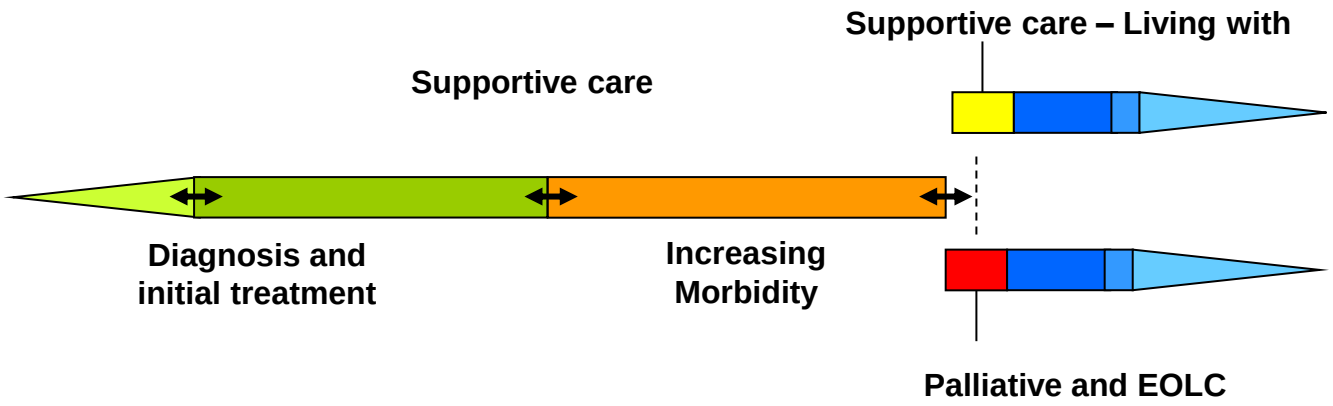
- Context
- Case Studies
- Common Concerns
- Personalisation
- Decision Making

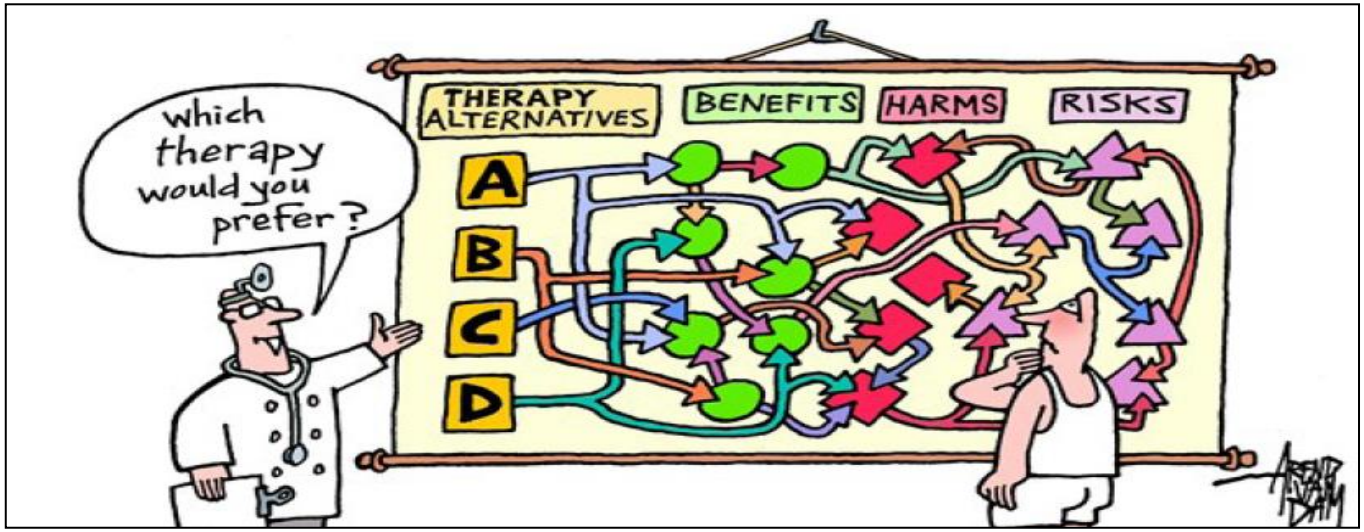
Context: Palliative and End of Life Care



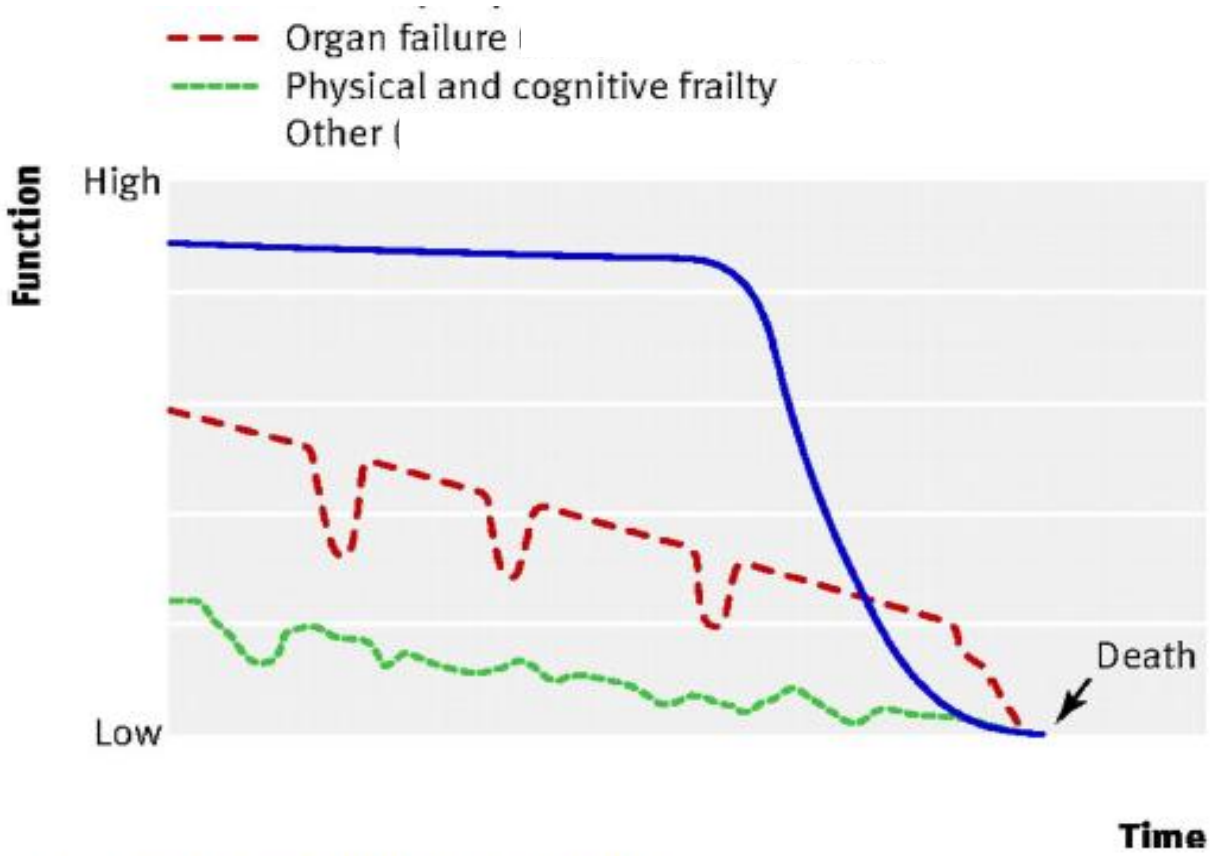


Supportive, Palliative and End of Life Care





Disease Trajectories



Murray, S. A et al. BMJ 2008;336:958-959

Trajectory of Frailty and EoLC

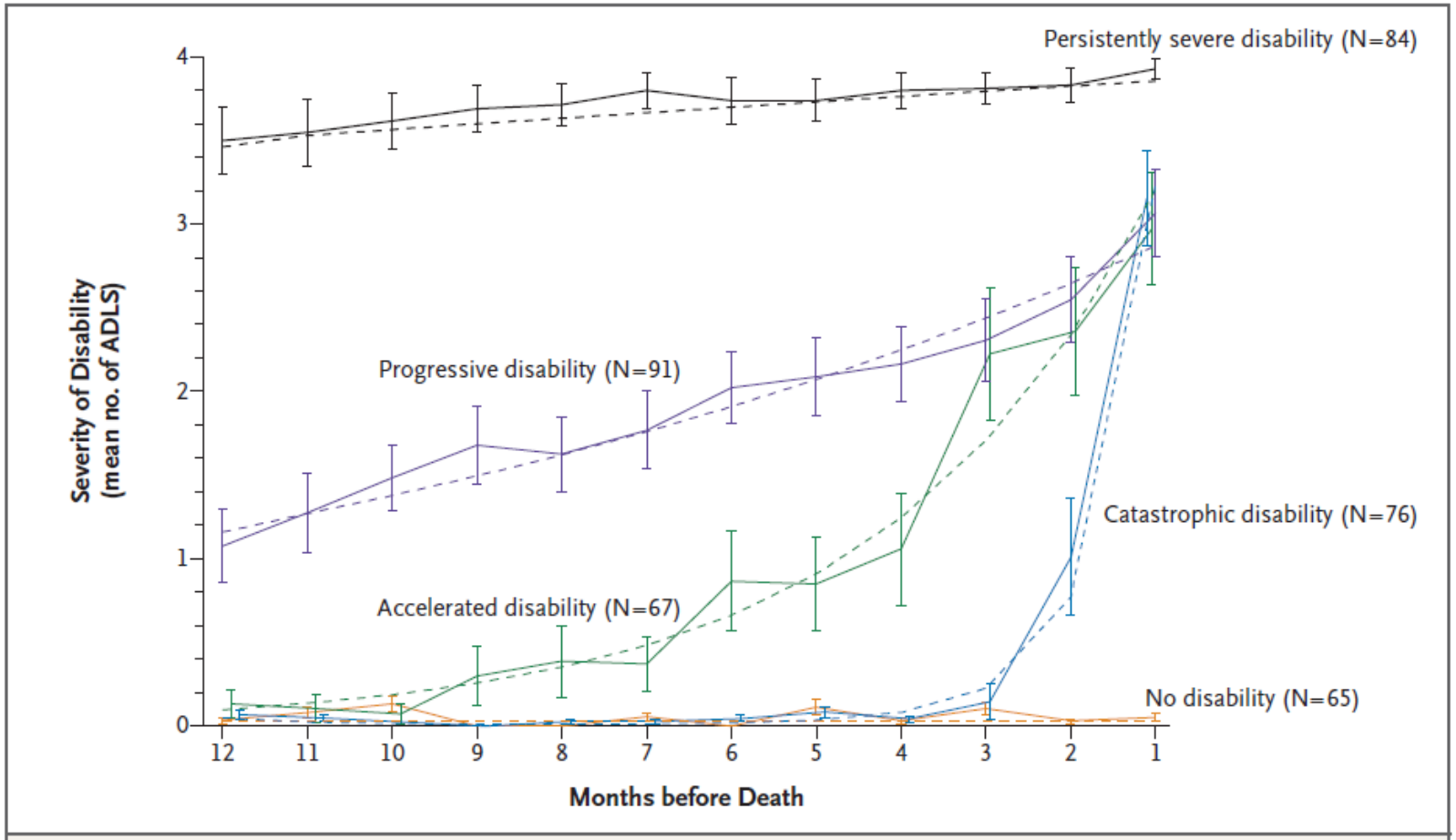


Figure 1. Trajectories of Disability in the Last Year of Life among 383 Decedents.

What symptoms could they have?

What are the other impacts of the disease?

Problems Common to Malignant and Non-malignant Conditions

Physical

Pain
Breathlessness/ Cough
Anorexia
Immobility
Constipation
Lethargy/ Poor Sleep

Psychological

Depression
Fear/ anxiety
Uncertainty
Guilt

Social

Loss of employment
Role change
Fear for dependents

Existential

Religious
Non-religious
Meaning of life

What are they thinking and feeling?

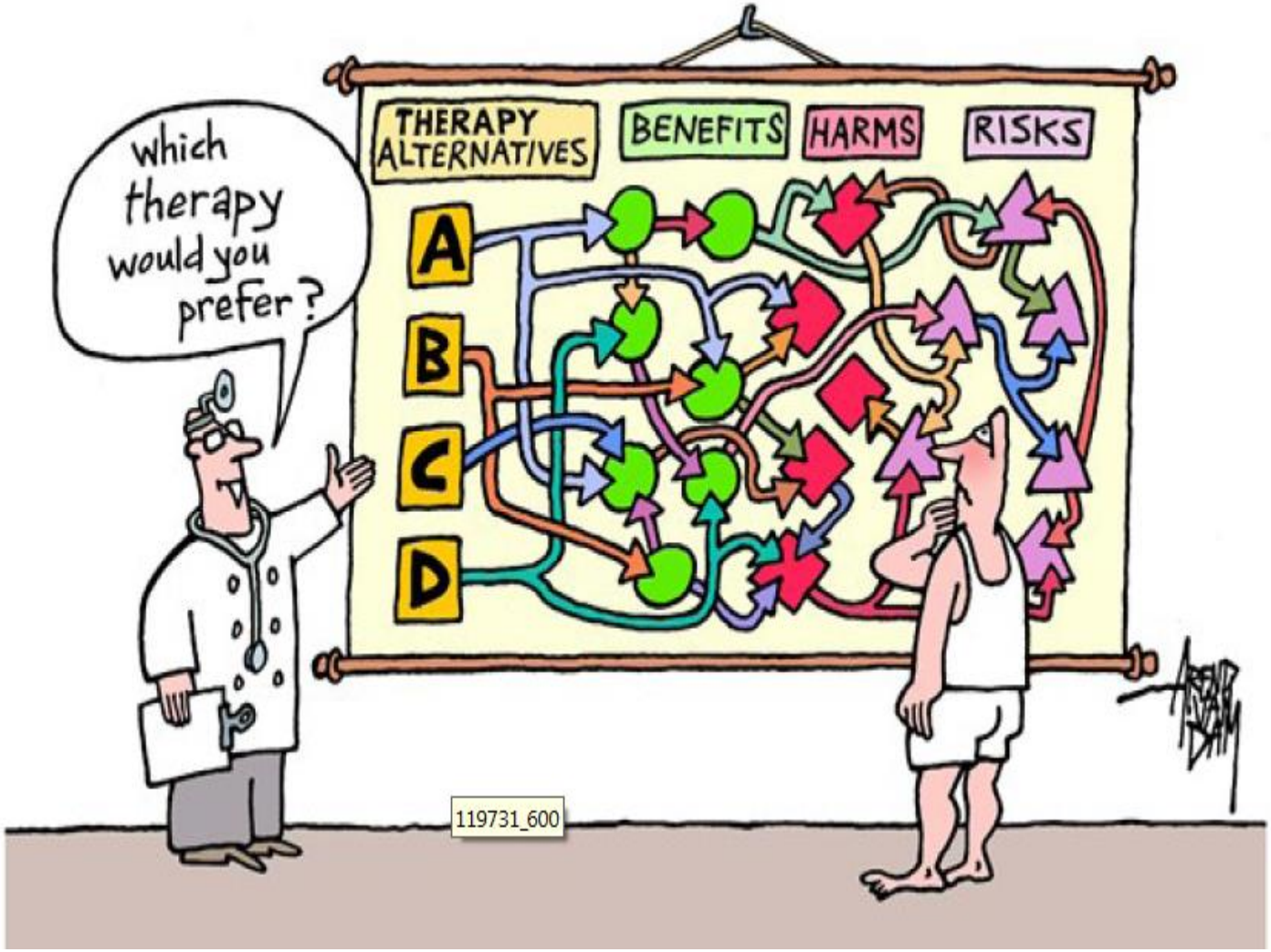
What might be important to them?

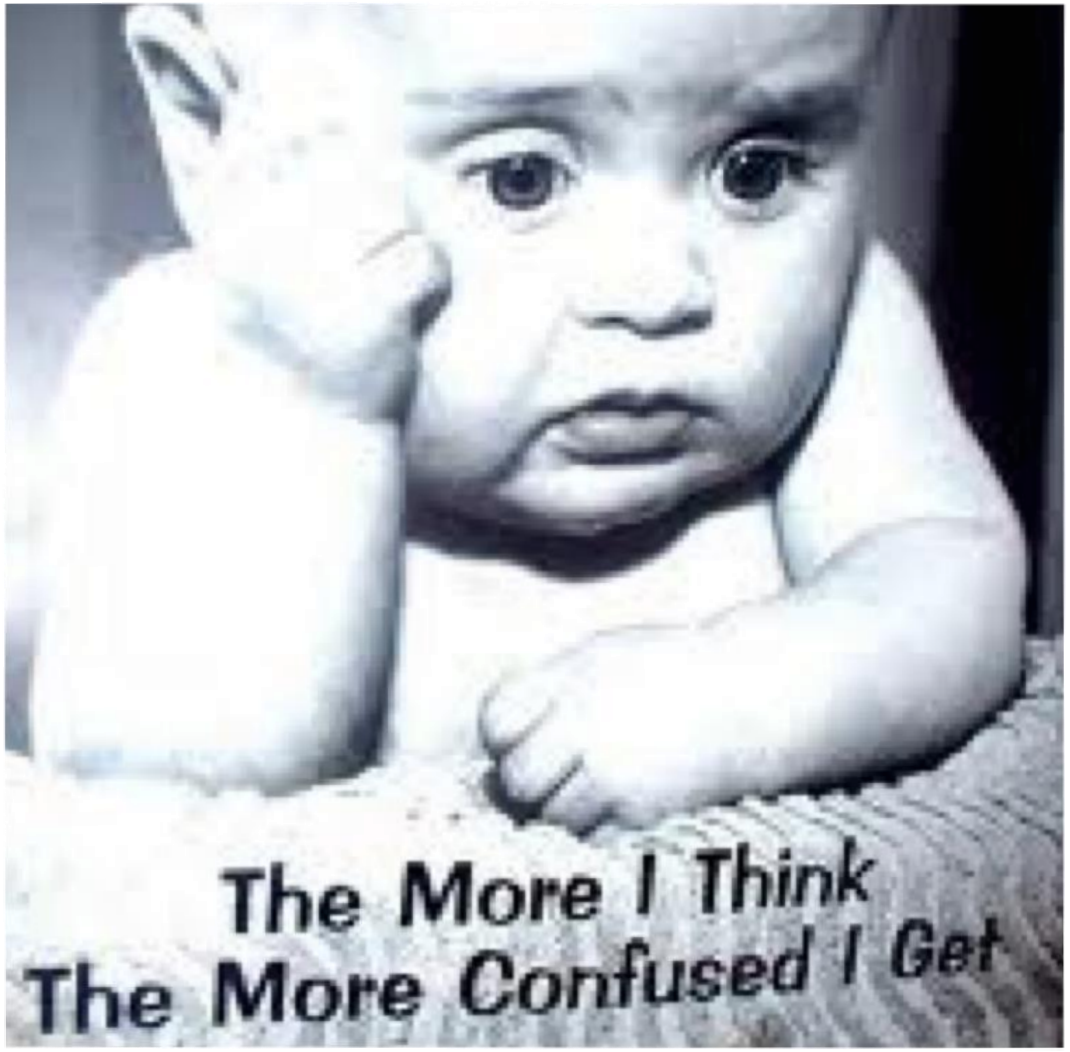
As expected lifespan shortens, will their priorities change?

What do they want?

What don’t they want?

Decision Making

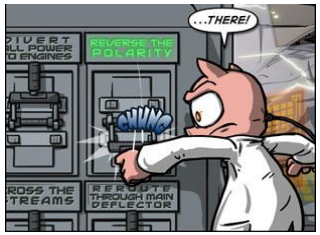



The More I Think
The More Confused I Get

Decision Making – What can Help?

Reversibility?

Reverse the Reversible



Acknowledge Uncertainty
& Limits of Treatment

Recognise & Communicate
Irreversibility

A person who has capacity should have the opportunity to make their wishes known and be included in decisions about care and treatment.

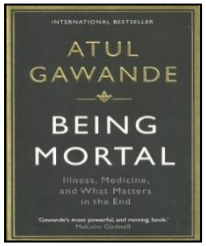
Decision Making

Paternalistic We make the critical choices. We tell them only what we believe they need to know

Informative Tell them the facts and figures. The rest is up to them. It's a retail relationship …the doctor is the technical expert

Interpretive What is most important and what are concerns. Then tell them about the intervention that will most help them achieve their priorities

Communication & Values

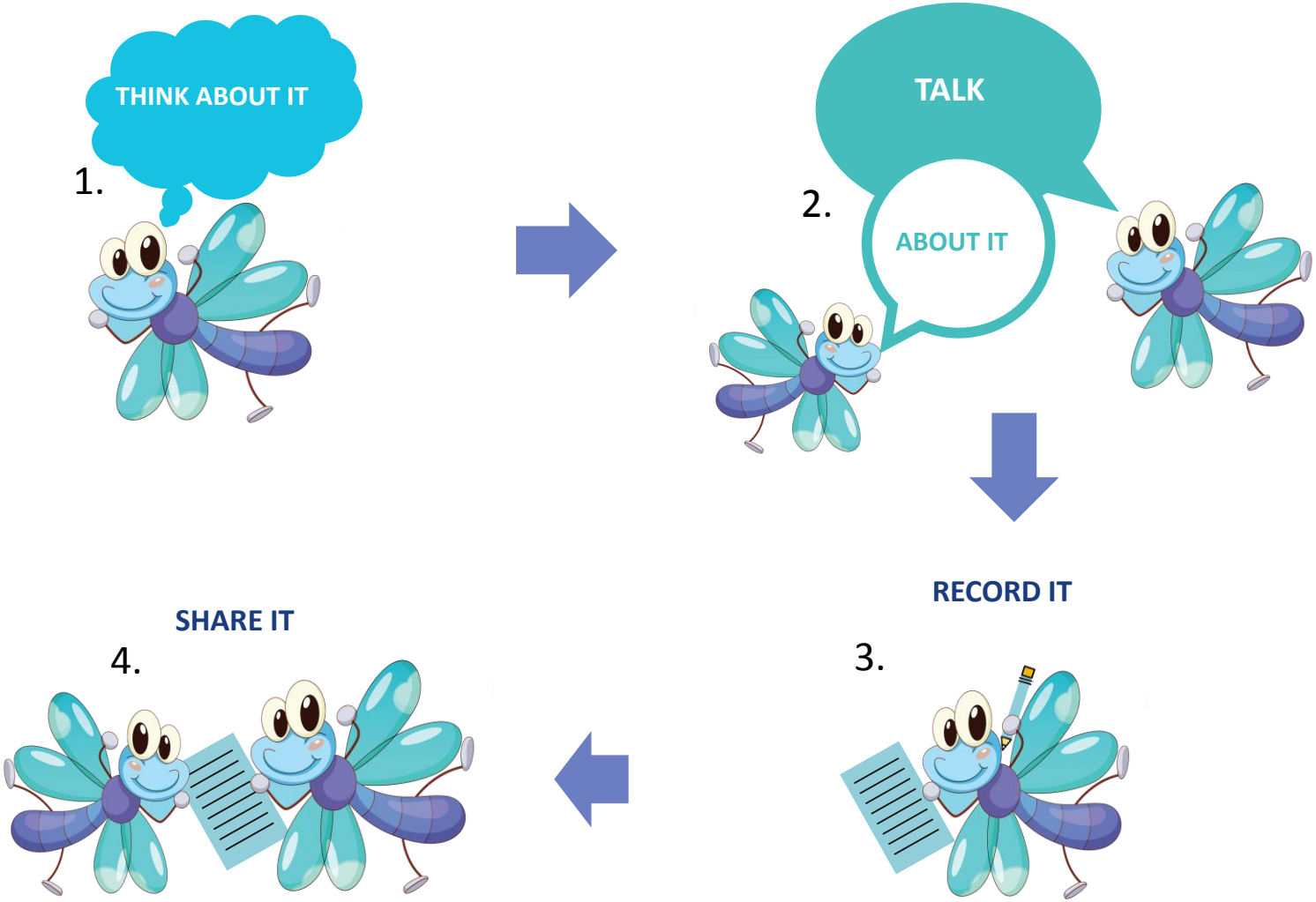


- ‘What would the best day possible mean now?’
- ‘What have you been forced to give up?’
- ‘If time becomes short, what is most important to you?’
- ‘What are your fears and concerns about what lies ahead?’
- ‘What kind of trade offs are you willing to make and what ones are you not?’
- ‘Who do you want to make decisions if you can’t?’

Communicating & Decisions

"Giving patients, their relatives or carers information about what is going to happen to them is an aspect of treating them with respect and dignity. Effective communication with patients and families helps to inspire confidence and trust. Conversely, poor communication can lead to a loss of confidence and trust."

(More Care Less Pathway, Parliamentary Review 2013)

…what about people who might not be able to make their wishes known?

Future Care Planning