

TalkOregon

Inpatient Serious Illness Conversations

Briana Ketterer MD, MS, FACP
Jared Chiarchiaro MD, MS
Katie Stowers DO, FAAHPM



Name & Pronouns

**One word that describes how
you are feeling today**

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1

Appreciate how a person-centered framework for goals of care conversations can improve quality and efficiency

2

Recognize the importance of sharing clear medical information to aid in patient understanding

3

Feel prepared to recognize and respond to patient emotion

Talking about **serious illness** can be **scary** and **confusing**.



Patients want to have a serious illness conversation, no matter the diagnosis

Patients want clinicians to be completely honest about prognosis



When approached skillfully with attention to individual **goals & values** patients tend to:



Receive care that aligns with values



Trust their clinician



Report a better quality of life

Serious Illness Conversations can feel similarly **daunting** for *clinicians* too.



Most say they **should have these conversations** regularly...

...few report doing so

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When empowered with skills to attend to individual **goals & values** clinicians tend to:



Start the conversation earlier



Experience less burnout



Feel more satisfied with their work

Luckily, communication is a **skill**:

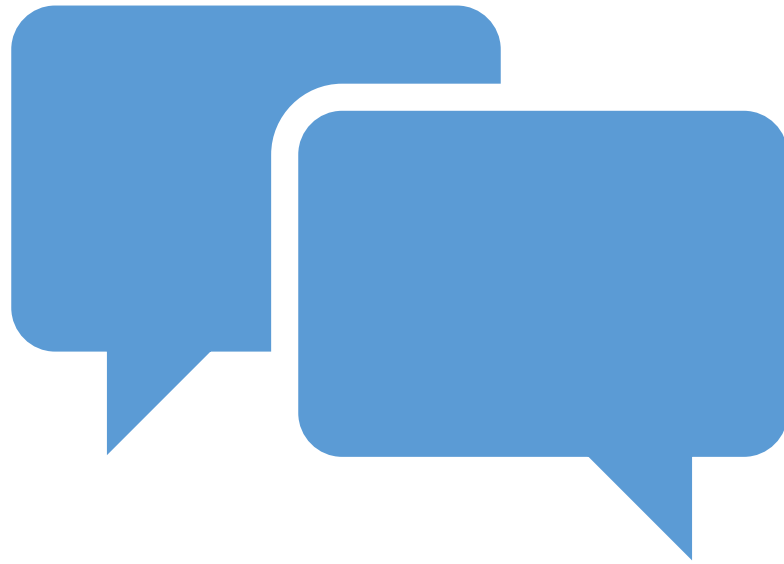
And when treated like any other skill...



Communication skills are **teachable**
and clinicians **can get better**.



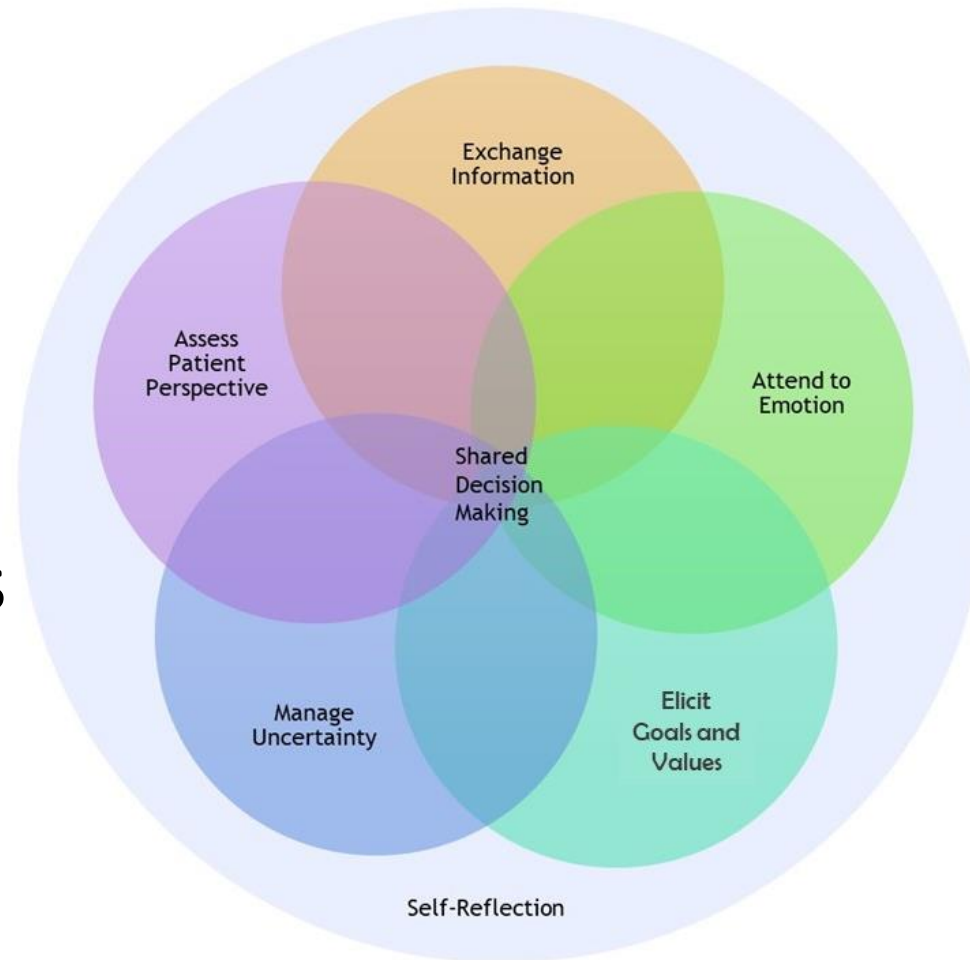
Effective serious
illness communication is
more than *magic*

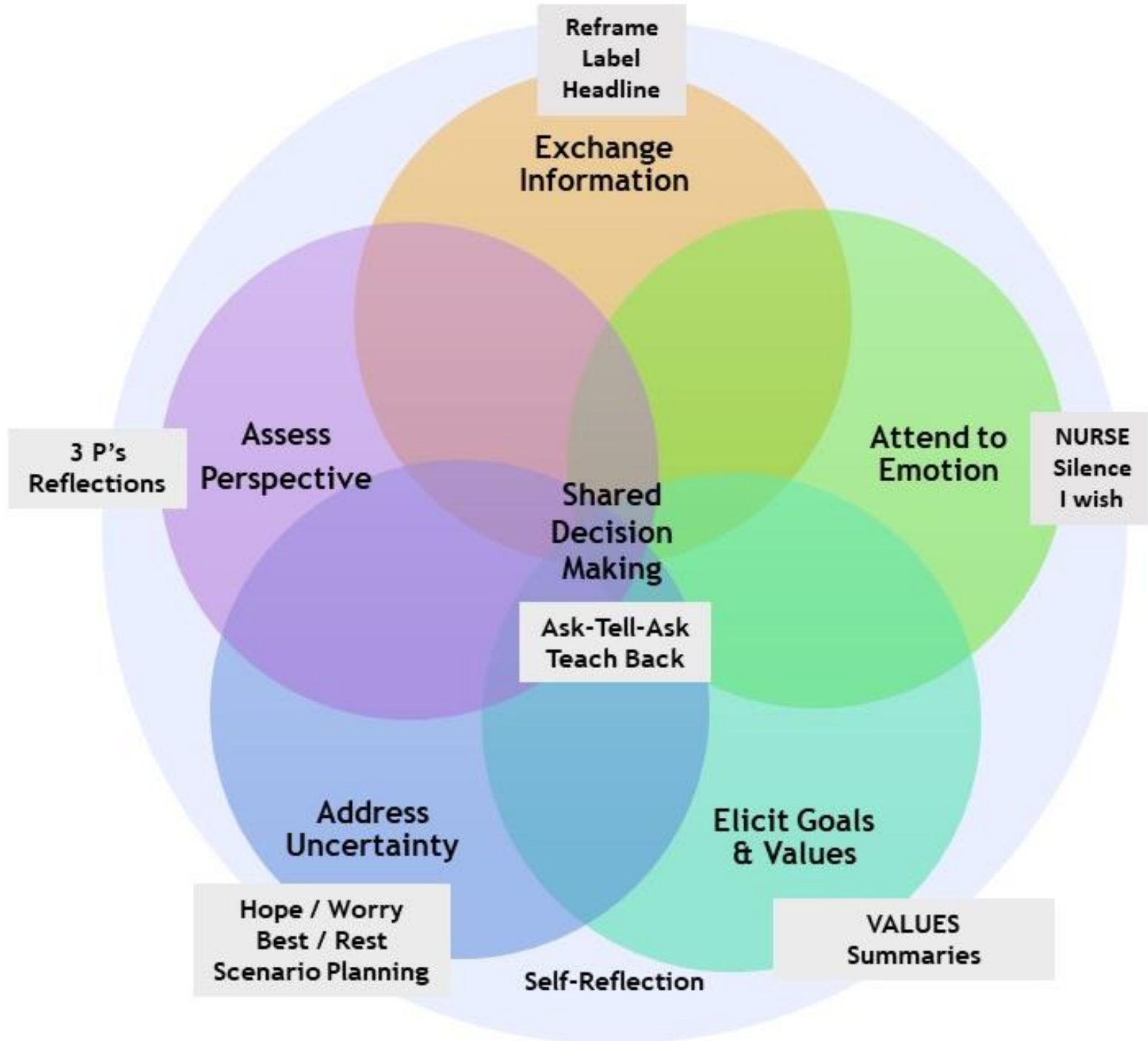


WHAT MAKES A CONVERSATION SUCCESSFUL?

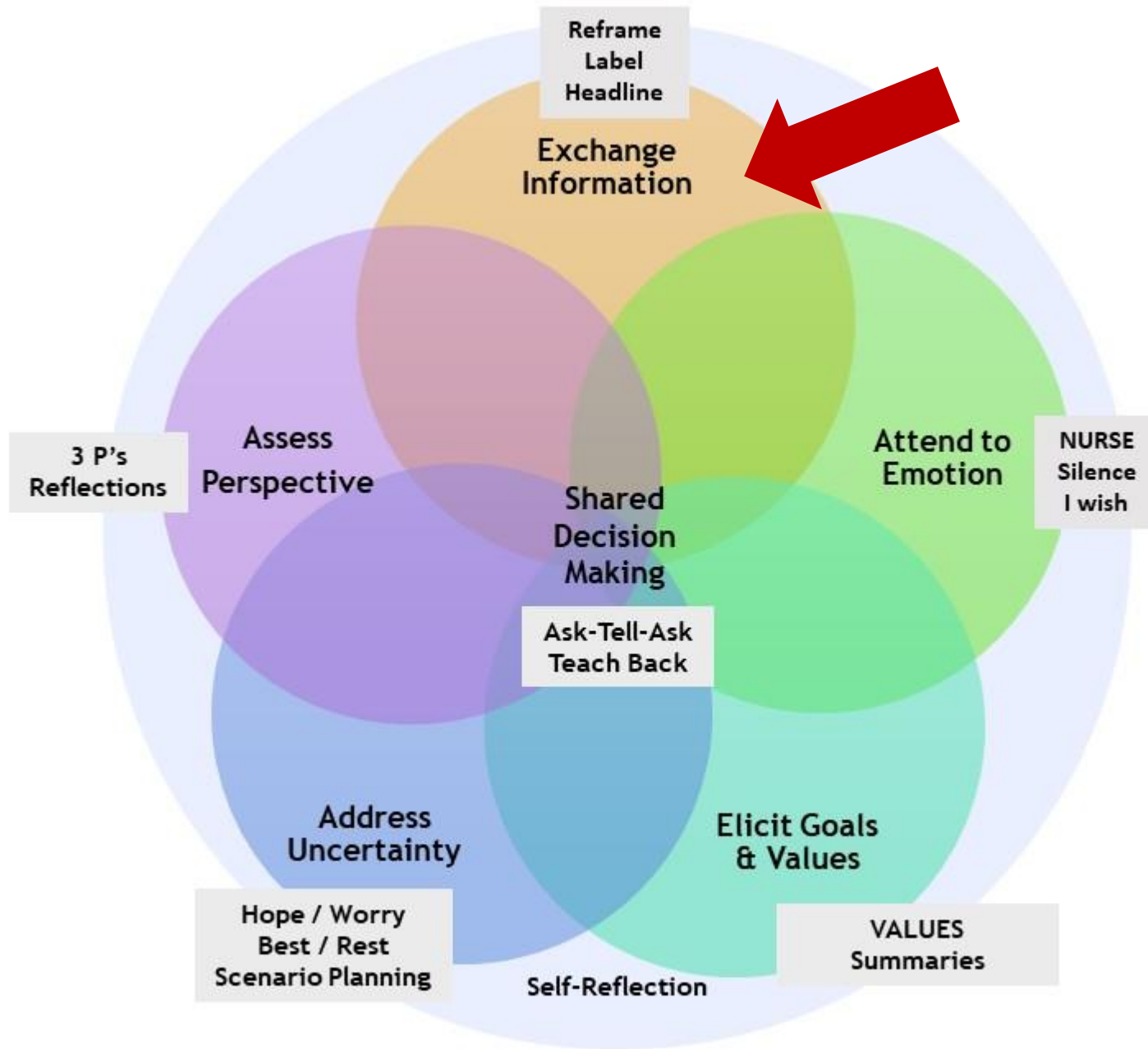
The core components of Effective Serious Illness Communication includes:

- Assessing Perspective
- Sharing Information
- Attending to Emotion
- Eliciting Goals and Values
- Managing Uncertainty
- Shared Decision Making





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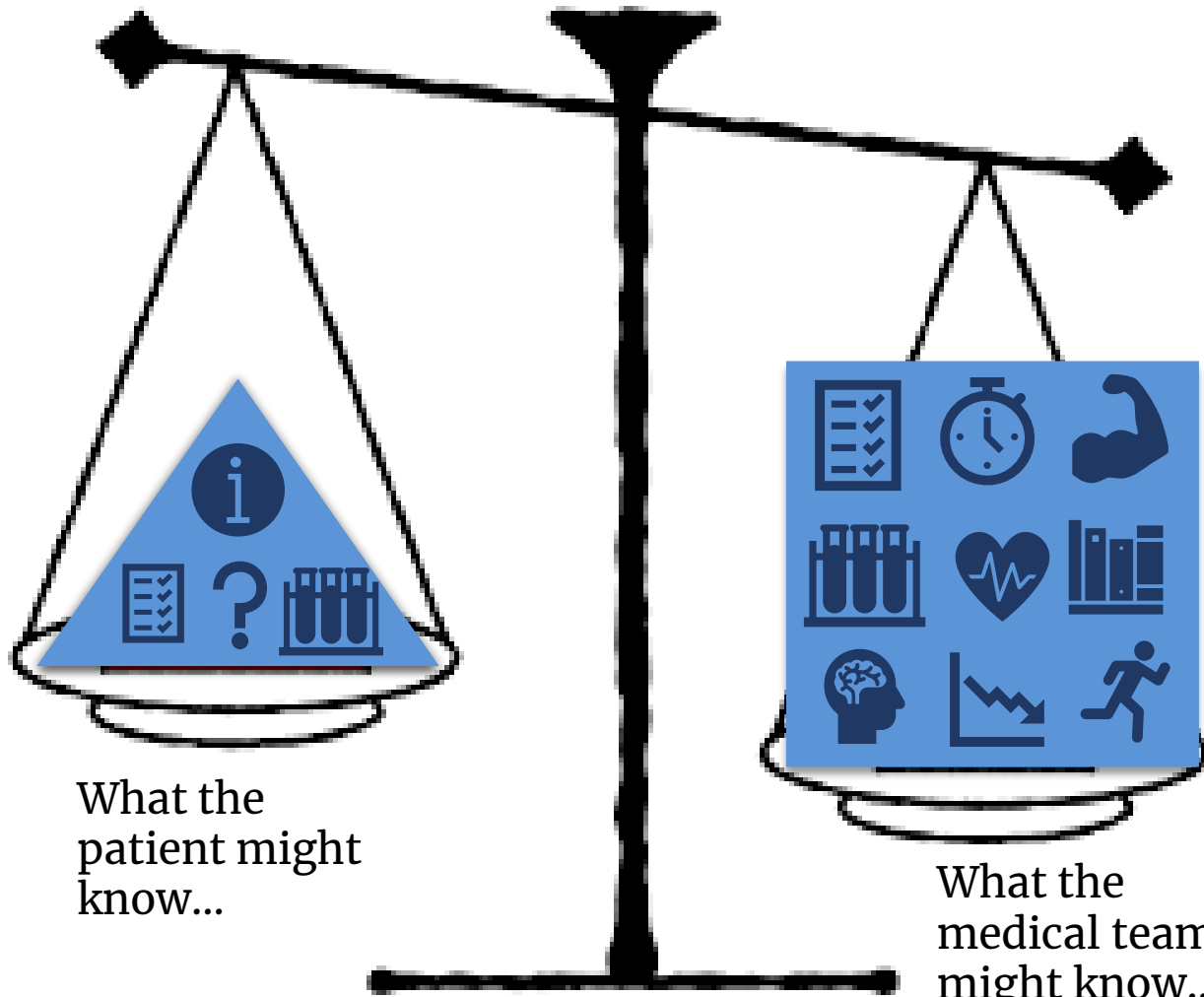


Core Elements & Tools of Effective Serious Illness Communication

Serious News

Medical information that alters how a person views their future



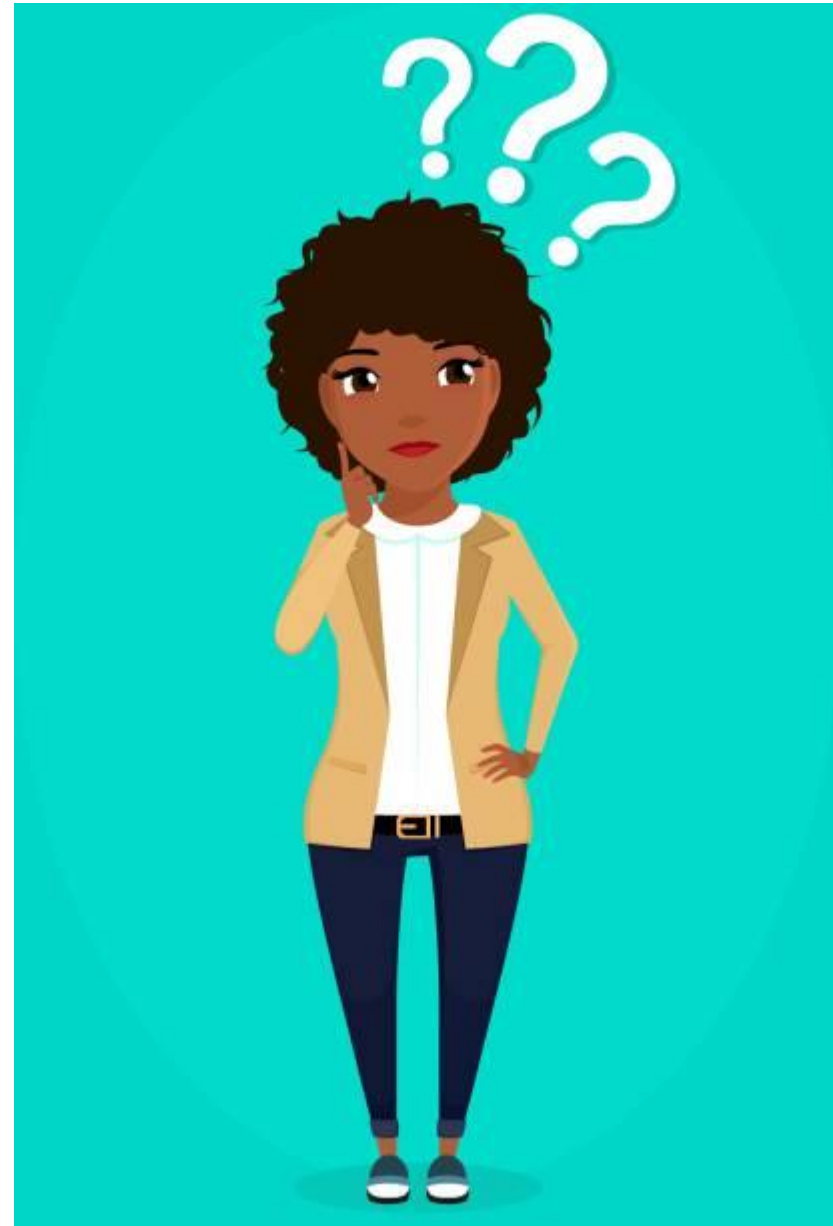


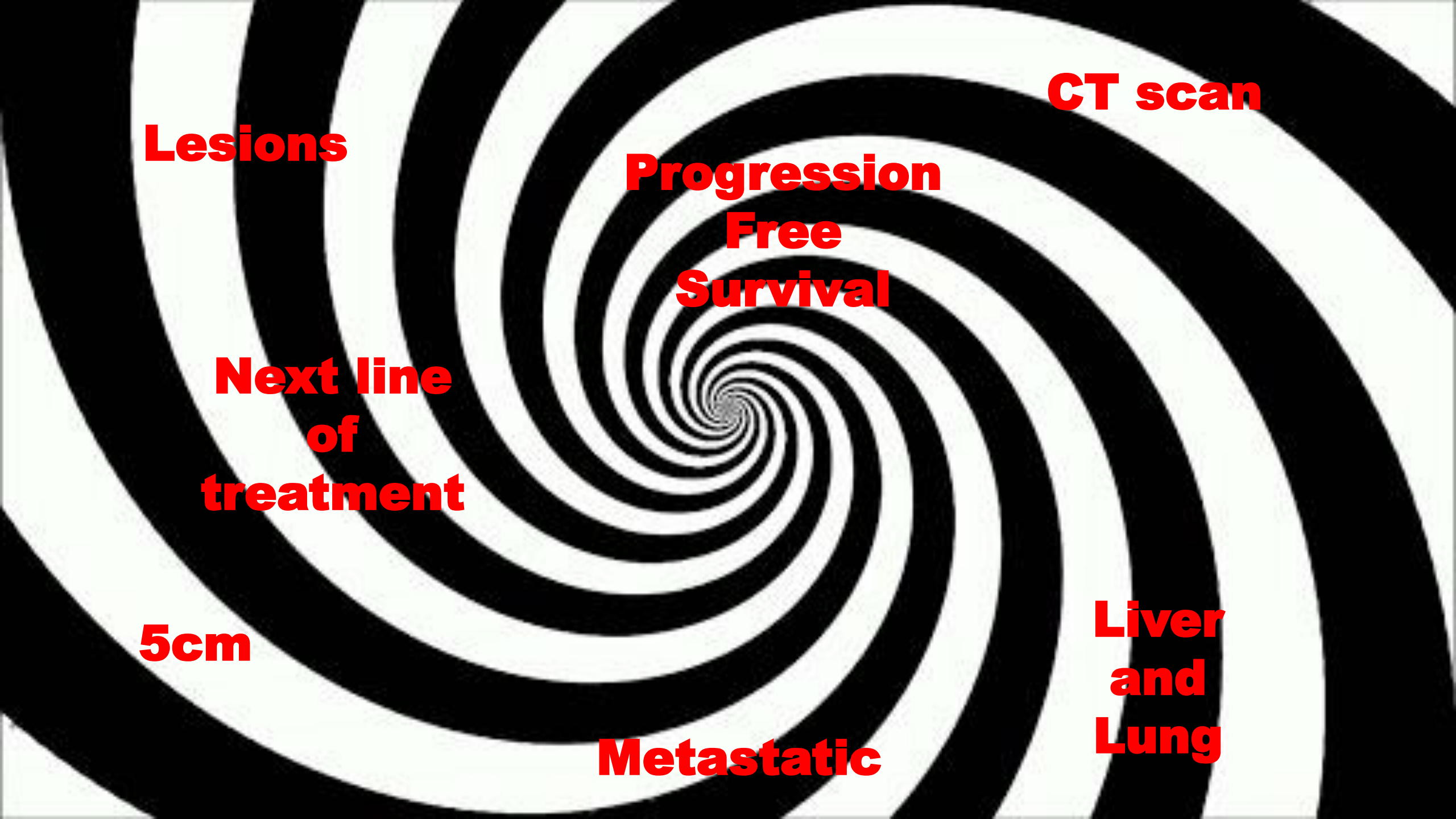
What the patient might know...

What the medical team might know...



“No one has told me a thing about what is going on...”





Lesions

CT scan

**Progression
Free
Survival**

**Next line
of
treatment**

5cm

**Liver
and
Lung**

Metastatic

Setting the Stage

Preparing to Share Serious News

1. Assess Perception

“What have you heard...?”

Sharing Information

Preparing to Share Serious News

1. Reframe

“We are in a different place...”

2. Ask Permission

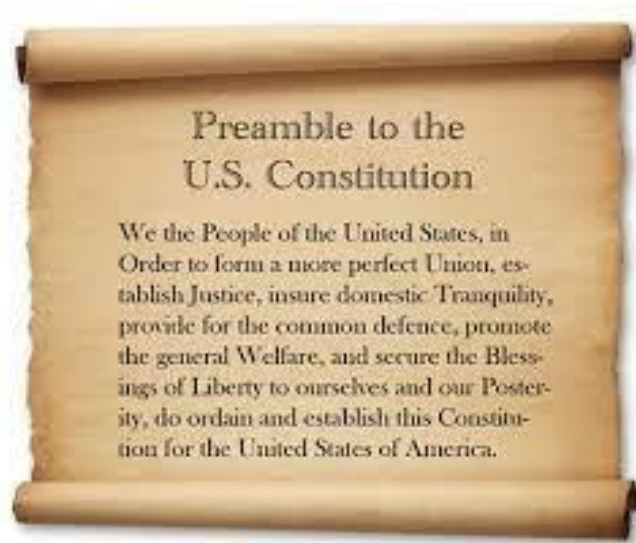
“Would it be ok to share...”

3. Label as “Serious”

“I have important news...”

Sharing Serious News

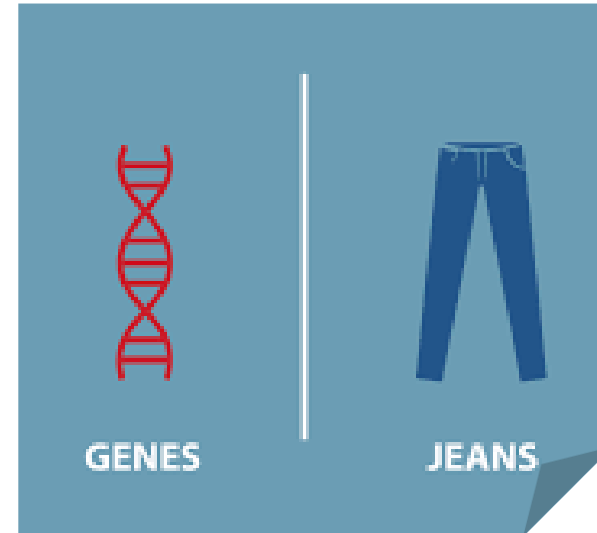
Common Challenges



**Unnecessary
Preamble**



**Beat Around
the Bush**



**Unexplained
Jargon**

Headline

For Sharing Information Clearly

What happened What it means

Fact + Meaning

✓ Short (2 sentences) ✓ Simple language

November 11, 1989

BERLIN WALL CRUMBLES

“The beginning of the end”
of communism

fineart
america

✓ Short (2 sentences)

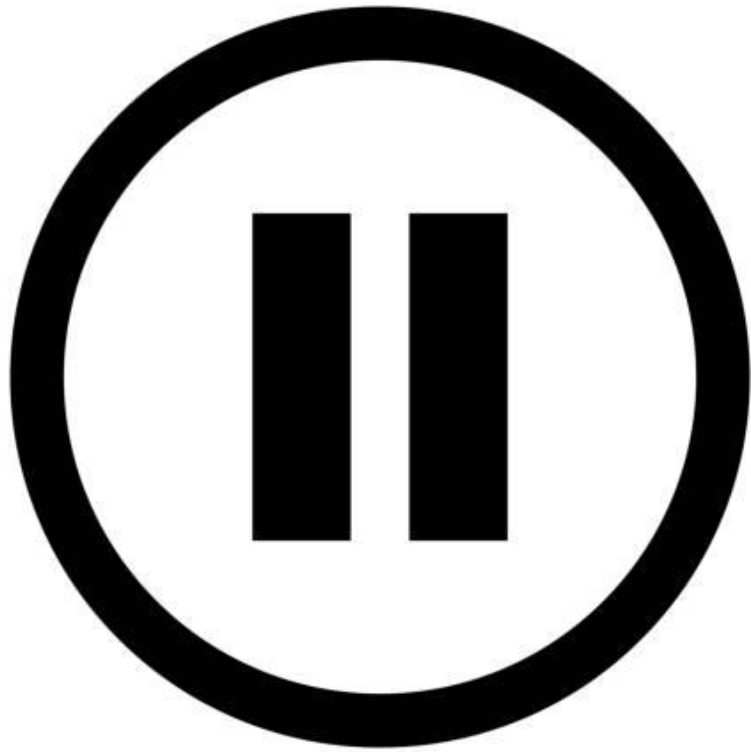
✓ What happened



✓ What it means



✓ Simple language



After the headline, **PAUSE**. Give time for the information to **SINK IN**.

Case 1

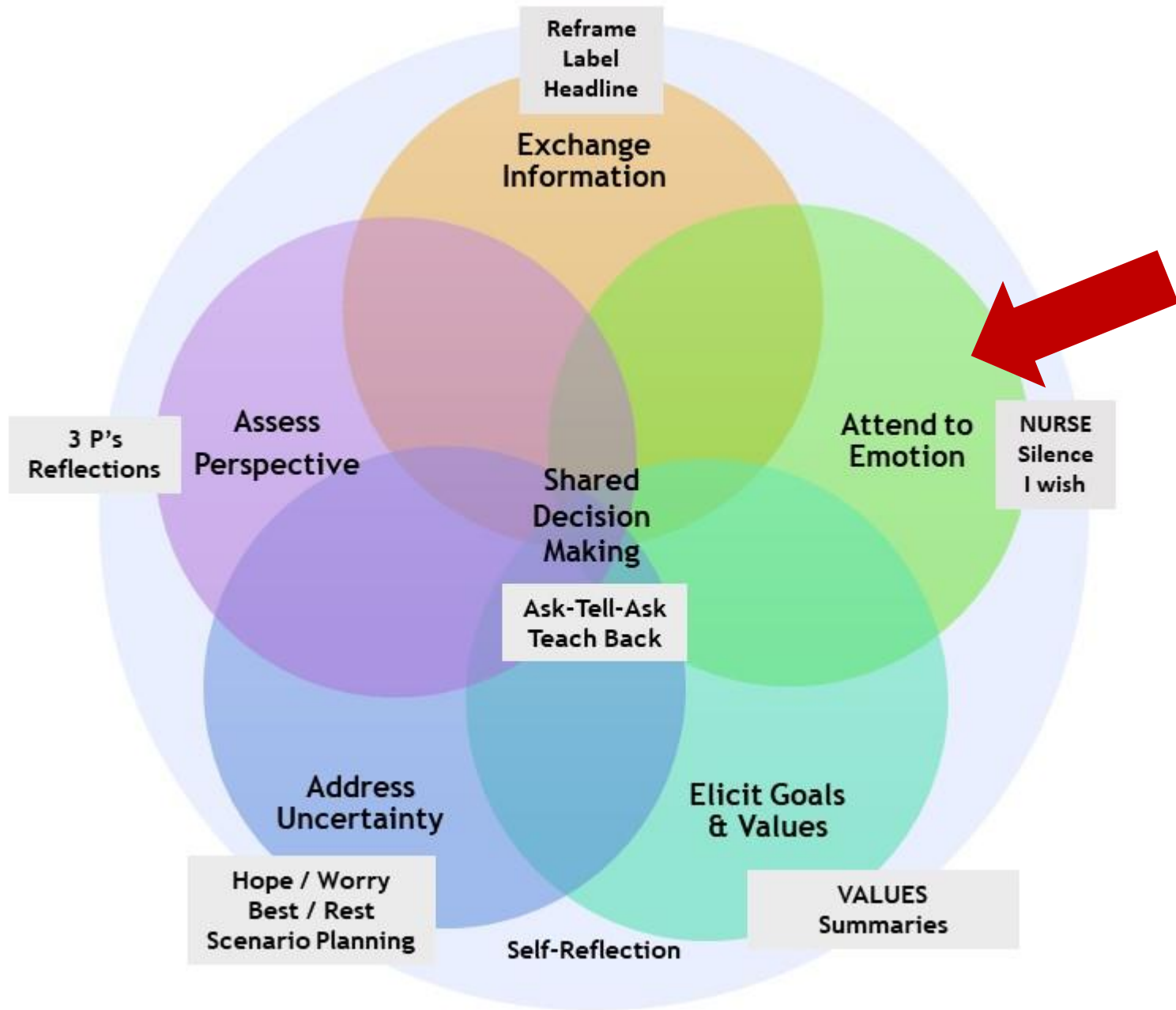
49yo person with metastatic colon cancer. CT shows progression of lesions in the liver and lungs. Oncologist says that based on current debility there are no surgical, radiation therapy, or chemotherapy treatment options.

What is the headline?

Case 2

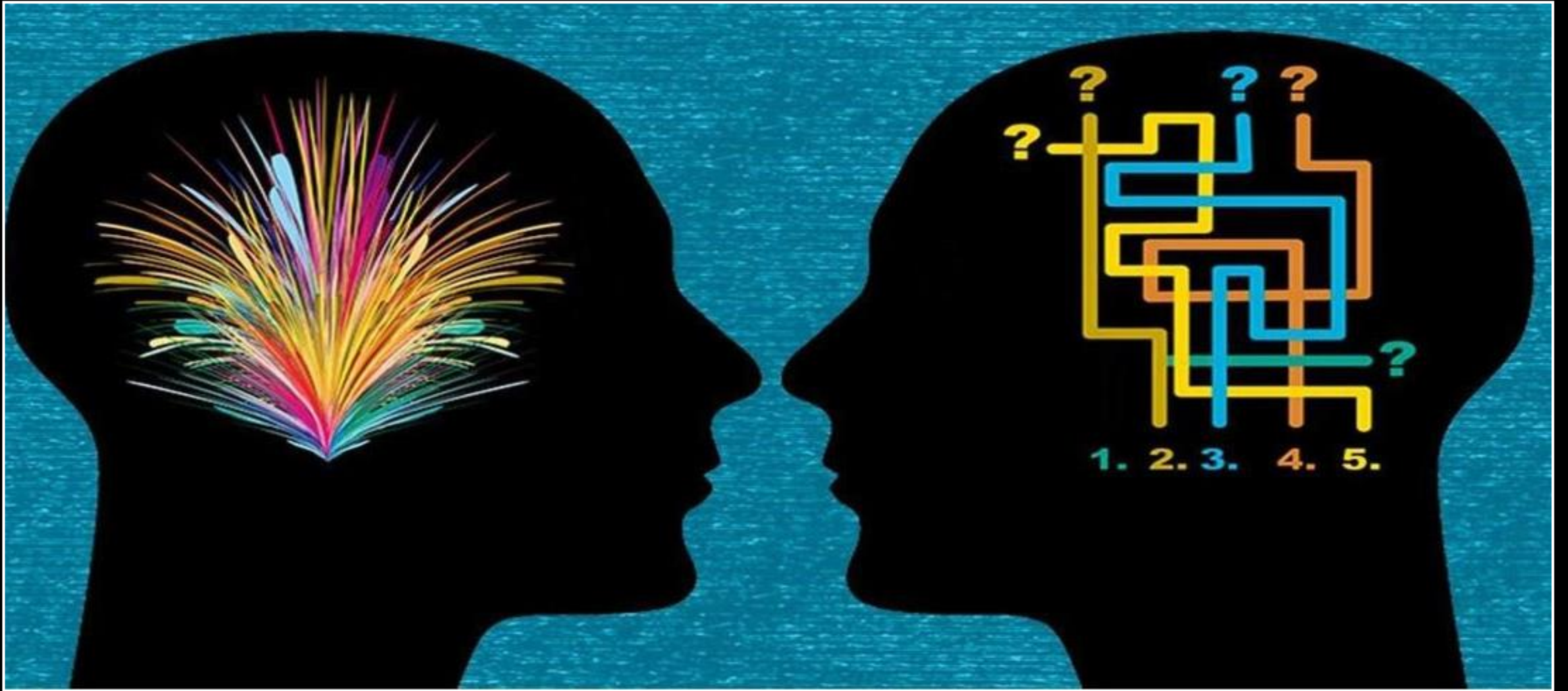
70yo person had a stroke and cannot move their right side. They are otherwise stable, no other organ failure.

What is the headline?



Core Elements & Tools of Effective Serious Illness Communication





Emotional Level (limbic system) vs. Cognitive Level (pre-frontal cortex)



Emotion is NORMAL and EXPECTED

Our Goal: Create a *holding space* for emotions

Outcome: Build *trust*
Allows the *rational brain* to catch up

One key components of creating a holding space is *empathy*

NURSE

For responding to emotion:

1. NAME

“This must be ...?”

2. UNDERSTAND

“I can’t imagine how...”

3. RESPECT

“I admire your strength in...”

4. SUPPORT

“We will be here with you to...”

5. EXPLORE

“Tell me more...”

WISH STATEMENTS

For aligning in challenging situations:

1. I WISH

“I wish I had different news”

When to Move Forward

- Decreased emotional intensity
- Cognitively-based questions
- Ask permission

Think of one emotional response you might expect a patient to say after hearing:

The CT scan shows that your cancer has gotten worse and there are no more treatments that can slow or stop it.

How might you respond empathically?

- Communication skills are learnable!
- Use HEADLINES to share information clearly
- Use NURSE statements to hold space for emotion



What surprised you?

What are you taking away?

What are you still thinking about?

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One goal for your serious illness communication in the next week

Help Us Improve!



Ready to Learn More?

- Join us for a powered by VitalTalk workshop
- Grow skills in navigating serious illness conversations
- Practice via roleplay with actors
- Receive feedback from communication coaches

