

# FAIR Health Tips for Shared Decision Making with Alzheimer’s Disease Patients and Their Caregivers

## FOR CLINICIANS AND HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

FAIR Health’s shared decision-making (SDM) tool for Alzheimer’s disease can facilitate your approach to provide some service elements required for cognitive care planning. The SDM tool outlines different treatment pathways—including self-care, cholinesterase inhibitors, memantine and monoclonal antibodies—providing information on the costs, benefits and risks with each treatment option. Refer to these conversation openers to support the SDM discussion, find out [What Matters](#) to the patient and apply your clinical judgment to make a decision together.

### SDM Approaches to Consider

The Three-Talk Model by Glyn Elwyn is an approach for shared decision making that consists of three stages. This includes Team Talk, where healthcare providers engage patients and caregivers in discussing the patient’s goals, values and preferences; Option Talk, where treatment options are presented and explained, including their benefits and risks; and Decision Talk, where a collaborative decision is made that aligns with the patient’s priorities and clinical evidence.<sup>[1]</sup>

Another approach, developed by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), is the SHARE approach, which includes the following five steps for shared decision making: Seek your patient’s participation; Help your patient explore and compare treatment options; Assess your patient’s values and preferences; Reach a decision with your patient; and Evaluate your patient’s decision.<sup>[2]</sup>

While shared decision-making models largely convey a similar process of collaborative decision making, providers can choose to use the approach that is most helpful to them. Use [FAIR Health’s SDM tool for Alzheimer’s disease](#) to encourage patient engagement and the SDM conversation.

Here are some conversation starters that may be helpful during the SDM discussion:

### To discuss the patient’s goals, preferences and What Matters:

- What would you like most from life?
- What matters most to you?
- What are you most afraid of?
- What are your goals for treatment?
- Is the cost of care a part of your decision?
- What is most important to you when considering costs?

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### **To discuss treatment options and costs:**

- If cost is a concern, we can review how it impacts your options.
- I want to make sure I've explained the options clearly. How would you describe them back to me?
- When considering these treatment options, what is most important to you?
- When comparing the risks, what are your main concerns?
- Do you have someone to care for you and help make healthcare decisions?

### **To align the patient's goals, preferences and What Matters to them with a care plan:**

- Are there any cultural or religious values that I should know about?
- Are there any specific treatments or therapies you prefer to avoid?
- How would you like your family or caregivers to be involved in your care?
- What support systems do you currently have, and are there additional supports you need?
- What are your priorities for your care as your condition progresses?
- What are your wishes for end-of-life care?
- Do you need referrals to outside support and services?

### **To discuss with a caregiver, if that patient has one:**

- Are you familiar with Alzheimer's disease and its progression?
- Do you know where to find more information about Alzheimer's disease?
- Are you prepared, willing and able to offer care and support as a caregiver?
- Do you know where to access caregiver support resources? Do you need any referrals?

Refer to FAIR Health Provider ([fairhealthprovider.org](https://fairhealthprovider.org)) for more information about shared decision making and resources for patients and family caregivers.

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The decision aids are not meant to be medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. They are intended to offer information to help you take part in shared decision making with health professionals. The clinical options in the decision aids should be discussed with your health professional, as each patient's condition will vary.

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### What Matters Resources:

- [Institute for Healthcare Improvement – “What Matters” to Older Adults](#)
- [Institute for Healthcare Improvement – How to Have Conversations with Older Adults About “What Matters”](#)

### Alzheimer’s Disease Resources:

- [Tools for Better Dementia Care](#)
- [Alzheimer’s Association – Healthy Systems and Medical Professionals](#)
- [Health Resources & Services Administration – Train Health Care Workers About Dementia](#)
- [National Institute on Aging – Alzheimer’s and Related Dementias Resources for Professionals](#)

### References:

1. Glyn Elwyn, Marie Anne Durand, Julia Song et al., “A Three-Talk Model for Shared Decision Making: Multistage Consultation Process,” *BMJ* 359 (November 6, 2017): j4891, <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.j4891>.
2. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, “Revised SHARE Approach Workshop,” October 2024, <https://www.ahrq.gov/sdm/share-approach/index.html>.

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