

The **SHARE** Approach

Steps of Shared Decision Making: Quick Reference Guide

Workshop Curriculum: Tool 1

The SHARE Approach is a five-step model, curriculum, and toolkit for shared decision making developed by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. The SHARE Approach aims to help healthcare professionals work with patients to explore and compare healthcare options through meaningful dialogue about what matters most to the patient and to make the best possible healthcare decisions.

The **SHARE** Approach

The SHARE Approach presents a five-step process for shared decision making that includes exploring and comparing the benefits, harms, and risks of each healthcare option through meaningful dialogue about what matters most to the patient.

This approach will help you share evidence-based information with your patients, elicit their values and preferences, and work together to make the best possible decisions within the context of their unique situation.

Step 1: Seek your patient's participation.

Step 2: Help your patient explore and compare healthcare options.

Step 3: Assess your patient's values, preferences, and situation.

Step 4: Reach a decision with your patient.

Step 5: Evaluate your patient's decision.

A few words about communicating with patients...

Patients attending a medical appointment appreciate a meaningful discussion that takes full advantage of a provider's expertise while allowing patients to communicate their questions or concerns. To achieve these goals, providers should:

- Acknowledge the complexity of the patient's medical condition.
- Speak slowly and avoid using medical jargon.



- Listen actively and provide information in small segments.
- Pause to allow patient participation.
- Periodically check that the patient understands the information.
- Use the teach-back technique to assess comprehension of key points.
- Use decision aids and other resources to help comprehension.
- Offer interpreter services for people with language or hearing barriers.
- Invite family members and caregivers to participate when appropriate.

What is Shared Decision Making?

Shared decision making occurs when a healthcare provider and a patient work together to make a healthcare decision that is best for the patient.

The optimal decision is based on the evidence about available options, the provider's knowledge and experience, and the patient's values, preferences, and situation.

Essential Steps to Shared Decision Making

The shared decision-making process begins when your patient has a health problem that needs a decision. Shared decision making applies to decisions about treatments, preventive services such as cancer screening, and other interventions and diagnostic tests.

Use these five steps to help your patients make evidence-based decisions about their healthcare.

Step 1: Seek your patient's participation.

Communicate that a choice exists and invite your patient to be involved in decisions.

Patients have a right to understand their options. They may choose not to participate, but try to engage them in their healthcare decisions when possible.

Tips for Engaging Your Patient

- Summarize the health problem.
- Let your patients know about any options for their health problem.
- Ask your patients to participate with their healthcare team in making healthcare decisions.
- Include family or caregivers in discussions.
- Remind your patients that their participation is important.

Step 2: Help your patient explore and compare treatment options.

Discuss the benefits and harms of each option.

Many healthcare decisions have multiple options, including the option to do nothing. Often, no single option is clearly superior. Use evidence-based decision-making resources to compare options.

Tips for Exploring Treatment Options With Your Patient

- Assess what your patients already know about their options. Write down a list of the options and describe them in plain language.
- Clearly communicate the risks and benefits of each option. Explain the limitations of what is known and unknown about each option and possible results of doing nothing.
- Communicate numbers in a way your patient can understand. Use simple visual aids (graphs, charts, pictographs) to help your patient understand your explanations.
- Offer evidence-based decision aids when possible. Summarize by listing the options again.
- Use the teach-back technique to check for understanding. Ask your patients to explain in their own words what the options are.

Step 3: Assess your patient's values, preferences, and situation.

Consider what matters most to your patient.

An optimal decision takes into account patient values and treatment goals. It also takes into account other issues that may affect the way the patient accesses and uses medical care.

Tips for Assessing Values, Preferences, and Situation

- Encourage your patients to talk about what matters most to them.
- Ask open-ended questions.
- Listen actively to your patient. Show empathy and interest in the effect that a problem is having on your patient's life.
- Acknowledge the values and preferences that matter to your patient.
- Agree on what is important to your patient.

What matters most to your patient? It might be:

- Recovery time.
- Out-of-pocket costs.
- Freedom from pain.
- A specific level of functionality.

What might affect your patient's care?

- Comorbidities
- Insurance or cost of care
- Transportation
- Time away from work
- Family dynamics and demands
- Cultural factors and beliefs

Step 4: Reach a decision with your patient.

Decide together on the best option and arrange a followup appointment.

Guide your patients to express what matters most to them in deciding the best healthcare option. When your patients are ready, they will make a decision. Your patients may also choose to delegate the decision to someone else.

Tips for Decision Making

- Help your patients move to a decision by asking if they are ready to make a decision.
- Ask if your patient would like additional information tools, such as educational materials or decision aids to help make a decision.
- Check to see if your patient needs more time to consider the options or discuss them with others.
- Confirm the decision with your patient.
- Schedule followup appointments to carry out the preferred option or active surveillance.

Step 5: Evaluate your patient's decision.

Support your patient so the decision has a positive impact on health outcomes.

For many decisions, particularly those related to the management of a chronic illness, decisions can and should be revisited after a trial period.

Tips for Evaluating the Decision

- Monitor the extent to which the treatment decision is implemented.
- Help your patients manage barriers to implementing their decision.
- Revisit the decision with your patient and determine if other decisions need to be made.

Collaborative Roles in Shared Decision Making

Who Is Involved?

Key Roles

Patient

The patient is an active participant in decision making and is at the center of the decision-making process.

Clinician/Healthcare Provider

The primary provider, such as physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant, communicates that a healthcare choice exists and invites the patient to be involved in the decision. The provider presents the options, describes the risks and benefits of each, and explores the patient's values and preferences.

Other Roles

Decision Coach

The role of a decision coach can be assumed by members of the healthcare team, such as nurses, social workers, psychologists, or health educators. A decision coach can help assess factors influencing a patient's decisional conflicts, provide support to address decisional needs, monitor progress in decision making, and screen for factors influencing implementation.

Manager/Support Staff

Other staff can help manage and organize resources within the clinical practice to incorporate shared decision making. Tasks may include managing decision aid libraries or technologies and the clinic processes and workflows that support shared decision making.

Family Members/Caregivers

Family is an important influence on patient decision making. They lend support in clarifying values and preferences. In addition, a family member may serve as a legal proxy for a child or an older or seriously ill patient.

Medical Treatment Specialists

Treatment options may require input from specialists.

Other AHRQ Resources

- Questions Are the Answer
<http://www.ahrq.gov/patients-consumers/patient-involvement/ask-your-doctor/index.html>
- Question Builder App for Patients
<https://www.ahrq.gov/questions/question-builder/index.html>
- AHRQ's Health Literacy Resources
<https://www.ahrq.gov/health-literacy/index.html>

Shared Decision-Making Toolkit

The following resources are available at www.ahrq.gov/shareddecisionmaking.

Communication Resources

- The **SHARE** Approach. Overcoming Communication Barriers With Your Patients: A Reference Guide for Healthcare Providers ([Tool 3](#))
- The **SHARE** Approach. Health Literacy and Shared Decision Making: A Reference Guide for Healthcare Providers ([Tool 4](#))
- The **SHARE** Approach. Communicating Numbers to Your Patients: A Reference Guide for Healthcare Providers ([Tool 5](#))
- The **SHARE** Approach. Using the Teach-Back Technique: A Reference Guide for Healthcare Providers ([Tool 6](#))
- The **SHARE** Approach. Taking Steps Toward Cultural Competence: A Fact Sheet ([Tool 7](#))

Shared Decision-Making Resources

- The **SHARE** Approach. Essential Steps of Shared Decision Making: Expanded Reference Guide With Sample Conversation Starters ([Tool 2](#))
- Putting Shared Decision Making Into Practice: A User’s Guide for Clinical Teams ([Tool 8](#))
- Achieving Patient-Centered Care With Shared Decision Making: A Brief for Administrators and Practice Leaders ([Tool 9](#))
- The **SHARE** Approach At-A-Glance Poster (12” x 18”)
- The **SHARE** Approach Screensaver
- The **SHARE** Approach Video
- Know Your Options Poster

This tool is to be used in conjunction with the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality’s SHARE Approach curriculum. To learn more about the curriculum, visit www.ahrq.gov/shareddecisionmaking.



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