

QUICK TIPS ON COMMUNICATION

Common Questions on Infection Management in Dementia



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WHAT YOU CAN SAY

"Why does she keep getting infections [or fevers]?"

At this stage of dementia, the body's defenses that fight infections are weak. Although it's hard to know exactly how long she has left, with these repeated infections [or fevers], I'm worried she may be near the end of life.

"But last time she got better right away with antibiotics!"

That's true, but she may have improved without them. We don't know.

"So why not just do a urine test?"

A urine test may not be useful. Older patients often have bacteria in their urine, even when they're perfectly well. Also, we'd need to put a catheter into her bladder to get a sample, which can be very uncomfortable. I don't want to put her through that if the test won't help.

"So, why not just give antibiotics?"

Antibiotics increase the chances of getting bacteria that are 'resistant' to many commonly used antibiotics. If a bad bacterial infection happens in the future, antibiotics may not work when they're really needed.

"So, we do nothing?"

Not at all. Can I suggest a plan and then hear what you think?

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TRAIN-AD



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R·E·M·A·P

Reframe

"He just seems to be fading away."

"It's so hard to see him suffering."

Expect emotions & empathize

"So, what does this mean for the next time he gets an infection [or fever]?"

Map values

"I think, he would want [...]"

Align with the patient's values

"Yeah, I really think [...] would be most important."

Plan treatment that matches patient values



WHAT YOU CAN SAY

I agree, we're in a different place than we were 6 months ago. This might be a good time to talk about what the goals of his care are now.

I imagine it must be very hard to see him get to this stage of dementia. Tell me what's going through your mind.

Before we make that decision, it may help to hear more about him as a person. What do you think he'd say is most important to him at this point?

As I listen to you, it sounds like the most important thing is [...]. Do I have this right?

Ok. Here's what I can do now that will help achieve what you say is important. Tell me what you think about this plan?