

# THE CONVERSATION PROJECT

Lunch & Learn



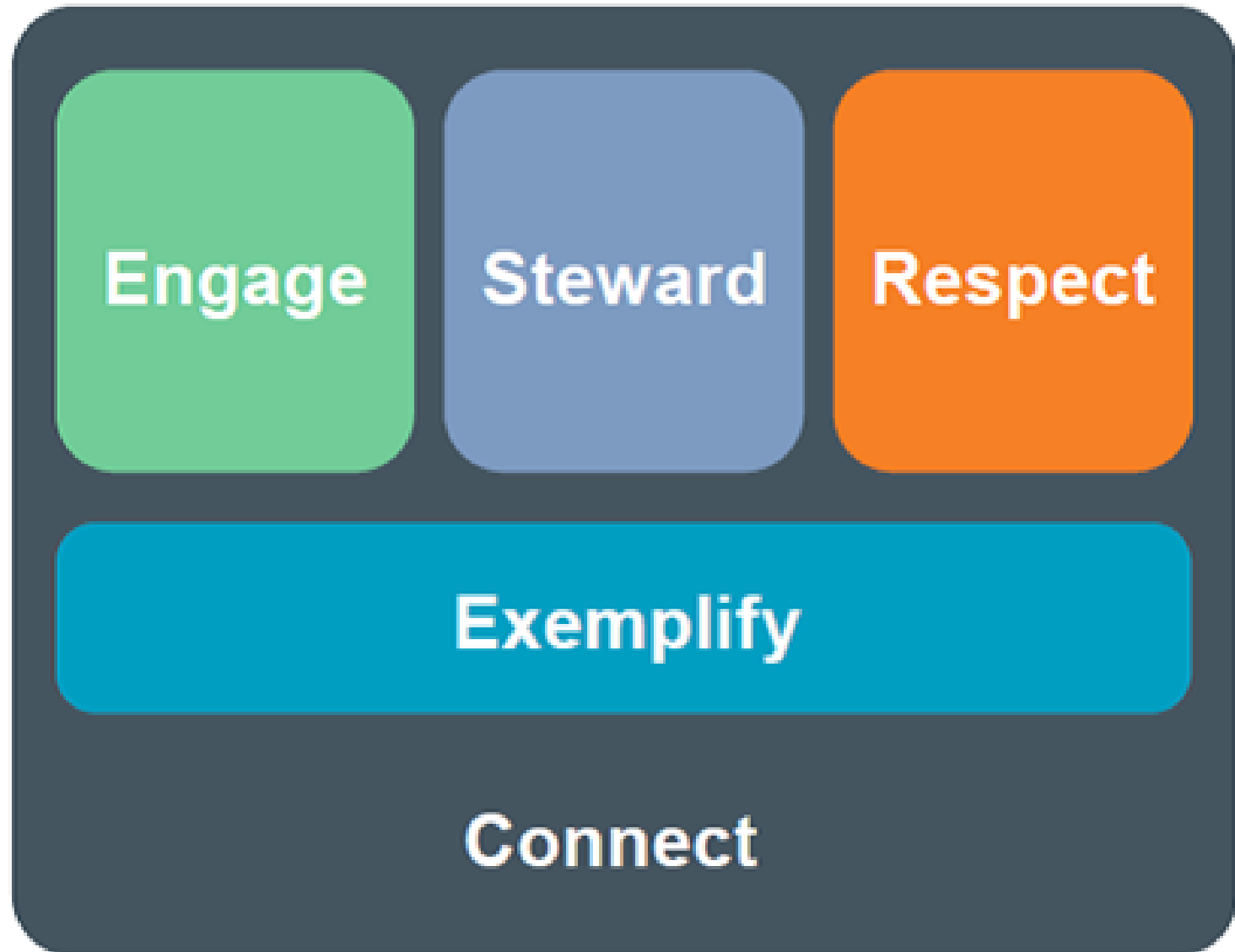
Sept 8, 2025

*Brought to you by Ellis Medicine Pastoral Care and the Wellness  
Committee*

# Take Home Messages

- Its too early until its too late
- Documents are important, but more so are the conversations about what matters most.
- For your AND your family
- Social Work and Ethics Committee are available to assist in resolving questions regarding HC Agents / Surrogate Decision-Makers

**Figure 1. The Five Conversation Ready Principles**



# Community Advance Care Planning Programs

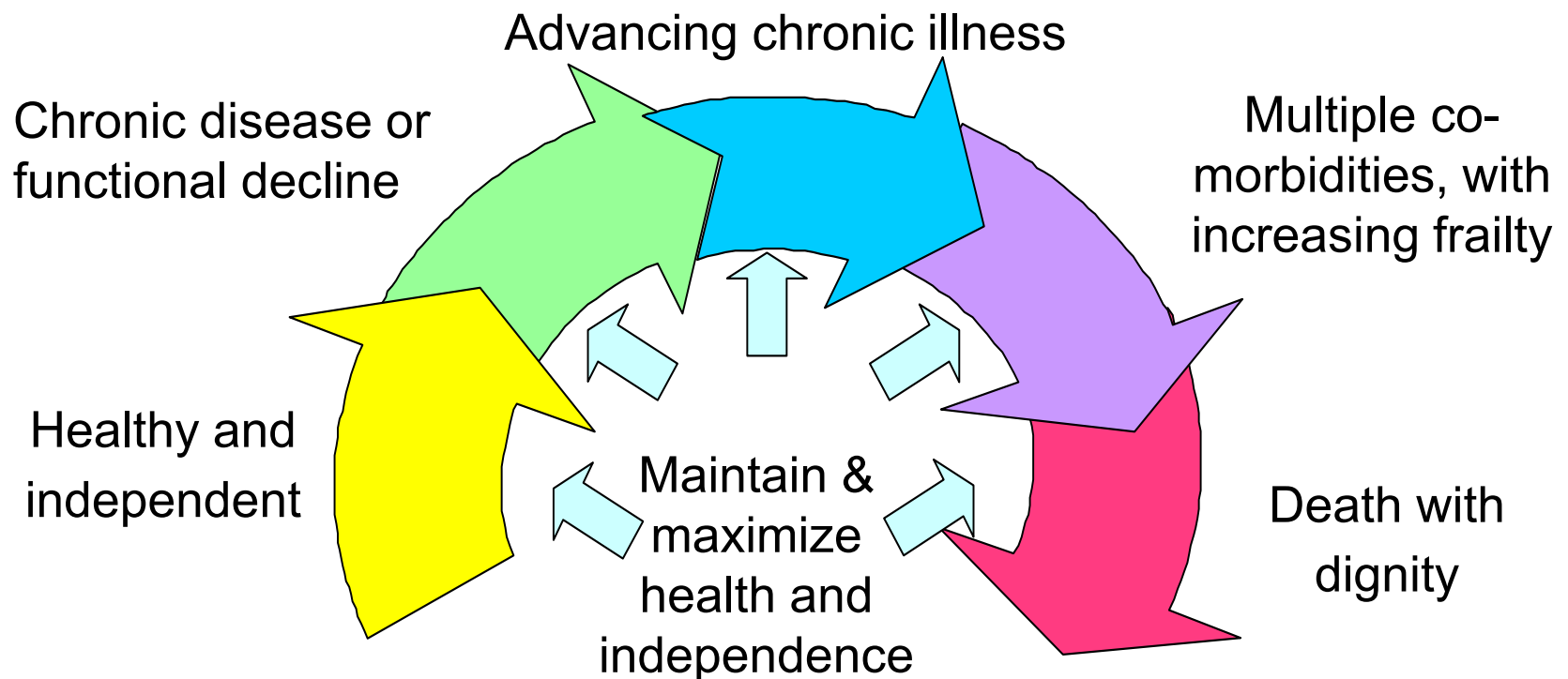
Ellis Clergy  
Breakfast  
2024 & 2025

- Sikh Community
  - First UMC Schenectady
  - St. Kateri Parish
  - Zion Lutheran Church
  - St. John's Catholic Parish
  - New Day Church
  - St. Lukes Amsterdam
  - Our Lady Queen of Peace
  - Cranesville Reformed
- Bellevue Reformed Church
  - Ballston Spa United Methodist
  - St. Anthony's Church
  - Nameton of the Ways
  - First Reformed Church Scotia
  - Clifton Park Assembly of God
  - Duanesburg Florida Baptist

# Advance Directives & Medical Orders

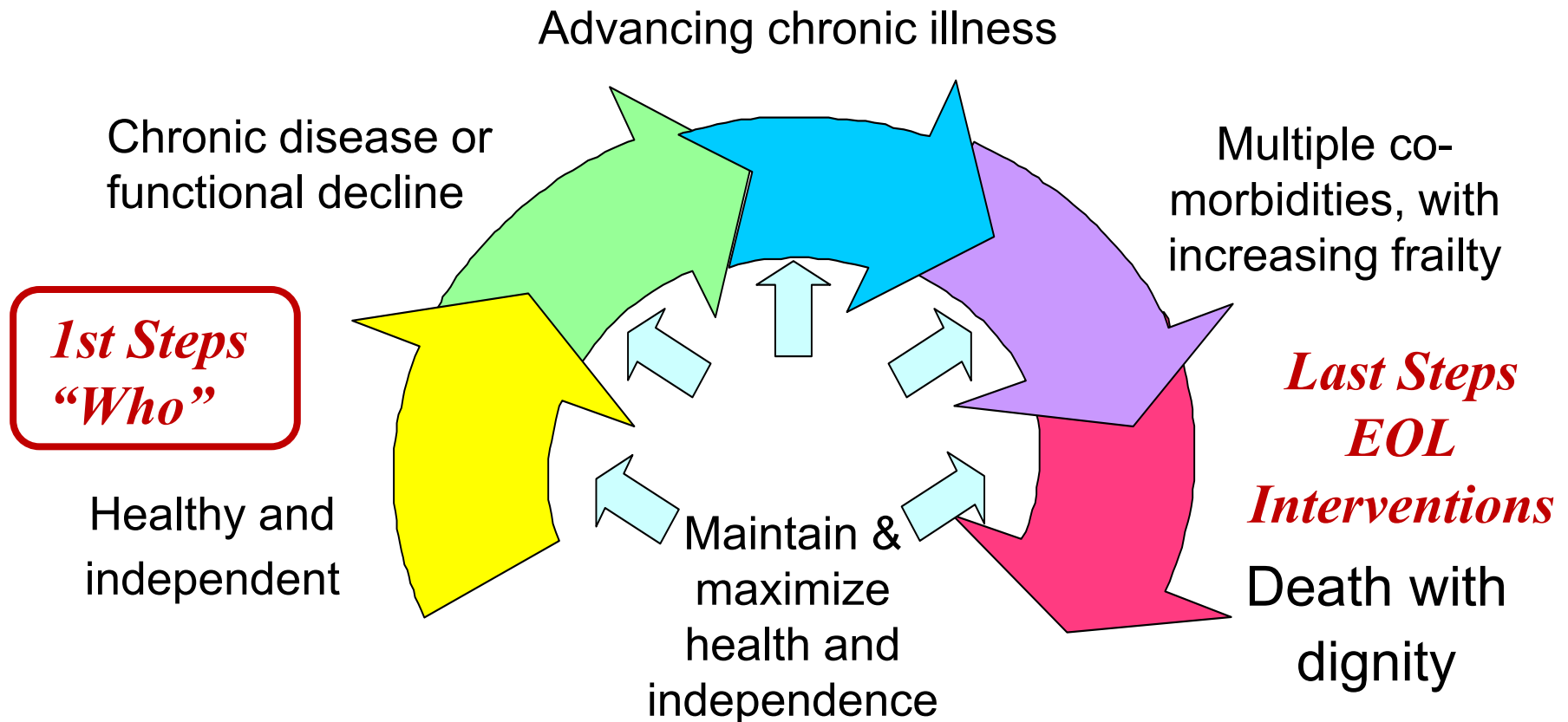
HC Proxy	Living Will	MOLST
<u>Who</u> would make medical decisions for you <b><u>IF in the future</u></b> you were unable	<u>What</u> Would treatments you would want <b><u>IF in the future</u></b> you are at <u>end stage</u> of a disease	<b><u>Medical Orders</u></b> that are <b><u>in effect once signed</u></b> by you or your decision maker & your doctor

# *What Matters Most*



Adapted from Pat Bomba, MD Compassion and Support and Bud Hammes, PhD Gundersen Health System

*Next Steps*  
*What Matters Most*



Adapted from Pat Bomba, MD Compassion and Support  
and Bud Hammes, PhD Gundersen Health System

# 1<sup>st</sup> Step Health Care Agent

“Who ?”

The person you appoint to decide about your medical care when you do not have the capacity to do so.

Only the patient can name a HC Agent

2 witnesses required for completion

2 MD/NP/PA need to document lack of capacity to empower HC Agent.

NOT  
a  
Health  
Care  
Agent

Durable Power of  
Attorney

Authorized for  
Disclosure of  
Protected Health  
Information (HIPAA)

Emergency Contact

A large yellow triangle is positioned in the bottom right corner of the slide, pointing towards the top right.

Who  
would  
you  
choose?

At least 18 years old

Knows what is important  
to you

Thinks clearly in  
emotional situations

Able to separate their  
goals from yours

The Conversation Project is an initiative of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement, a not-for-profit organization that is a leader in health and health care improvement worldwide.

<https://theconversationproject.org/who-will-speak-for-you/>

# NYS Family HealthCare Decisions Act

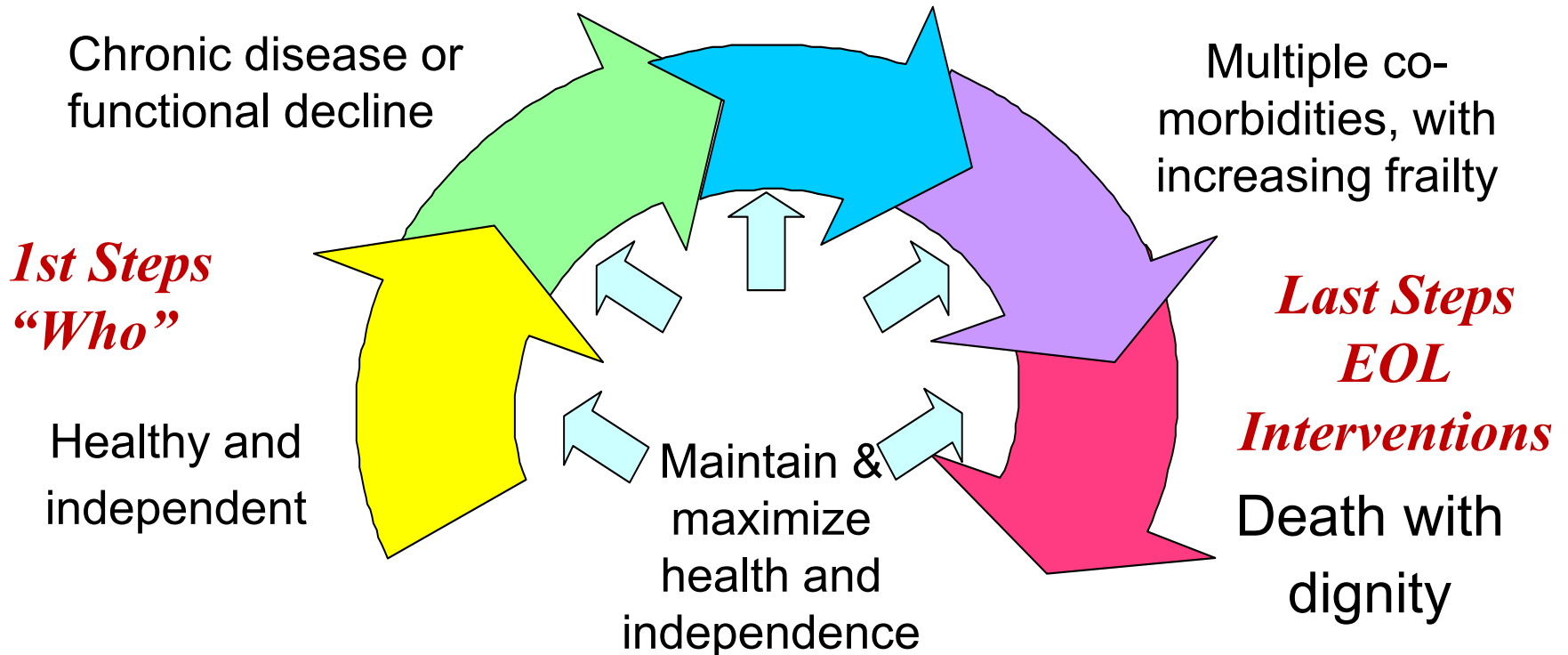
**Who is the surrogate medical decision-maker when a person does not have decisional capacity and has not designated a HC Agent ?**

**In order of highest priority:**

1. Court appointed guardian
2. Spouse, if not legally separated from the patient, or the domestic partner
3. Son or daughter, age 18 or older
4. Parent
5. Brother or sister, age 18 or older
6. Actively involved close friend, age 18 or older

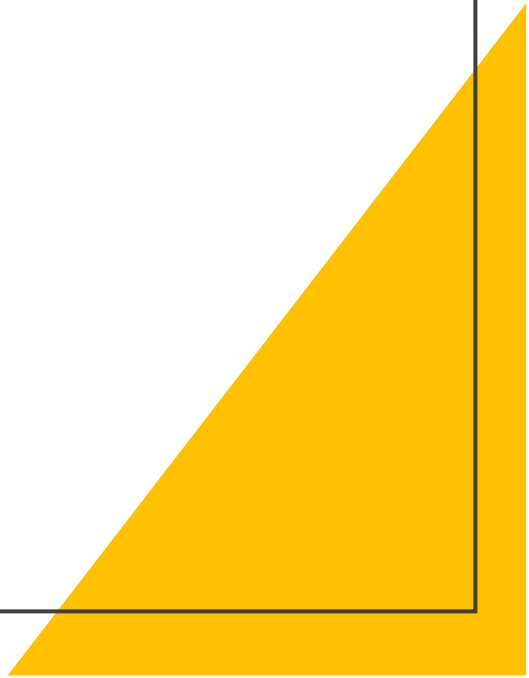
*Next Steps*  
*What Matters Most*

Advancing chronic illness



Adapted from Pat Bomba, MD Compassion and Support  
and Bud Hammes, PhD Gundersen Health System

*What  
Matters  
Most ?*



What  
Matters  
Most?

From the  
Golf  
Course  
to  
Life

***Get the ball in  
the hole with  
the fewest  
strokes***

What  
Matters  
Most?

Extend life  
Cure  
Fight the Disease  
Live to 100

*What trade-offs are you  
willing to accept to  
achieve this ?*

What  
Matters  
Most?

*Have a good time, be  
outdoors with friends*

What is a good day?

What is a hard day?

What are you hoping for?

What concerns you most?

What  
Matters  
Most?

*My golf ball doesn't hit  
anyone*

How much does my illness  
& treatments affect my  
family?

What  
Matters  
Most?

*How strictly do I follow  
the rules?*

Medical rules ... meds,  
tests, appointments,  
therapy

Cultural, faith based  
norms



## What Matters to Me

A Workbook for People with Serious Illness

NAME

DATE



the conversation project

## My Health .....

- > What is your understanding of your current health situation?

- > How much information about what might be ahead with your illness would you like from your health care team?

## About Me .....

- > **MY GOOD DAYS** • What does a good day look like for you?

Here are some things I like to do on a good day:

### EXAMPLES

*Get up and dressed • Play with my cat • Make a phone call • Watch TV • Have coffee with a friend*

- > **MY HARD DAYS** • What does a hard day look like for you?

These are the toughest things for me to deal with on a hard day:

### EXAMPLES

*Can't get out of bed • In a lot of discomfort • No appetite • Don't feel like talking to anyone*

- > **MY GOALS** • What are your most important goals if your health situation worsens?

These are some things I would like to be able to do in the future:

### EXAMPLES

*Take my dog for a walk • Attend my child's wedding • Feel well enough to go to church • Talk to my grandchildren when they come to visit*

<https://theconversationproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/WhatMattersToMeWorkbook.pdf>

## My Care

Everyone has their own preferences about the kind of care they do and don't want to receive. Use the scales below to think about what you want at this time.

*Note: These scales represent a range of feelings; there are no right or wrong answers.*

- **Answer where you are right now.** For each scale below, think about what you want now. Revisit your answers in the future, as they may change over time.
- **Use your answers as conversation starters.** Your answers can be a good starting point to talk with others about why you answered the way you did.

### As a patient, I'd like to know...

Only the basics about my condition and my treatment ..... All the details about my condition and my treatment

### When there is a medical decision to be made, I would like...

My health care team to make all the decisions ..... To have a say in decisions whenever possible

### What are your concerns about medical treatments?

I worry that I won't get enough care ..... I worry that I'll get too much care

### How much medical treatment are you willing to go through for the possibility of gaining more time?

Nothing: I don't want any more medical treatments ..... Everything: I want to try any medical treatments possible

### If your health situation worsens, where do you want to be?

I strongly prefer to be in a health care facility ..... I strongly prefer to be at home, if possible

### When it comes to sharing information about my illness with others...

I don't want those close to me to know all the details ..... I do want those close to me to know all the details

### MY FEARS AND WORRIES • What are your biggest fears and worries about the future with your health?

These are the main things I worry about:

#### EXAMPLES

*I don't want to be in pain • I'm worried that I won't be able to get the care I want • I don't want to feel stuck someplace where no one will visit me • I worry about the cost of my care • What if I need more care than my caregivers can provide?*

### MY STRENGTHS • As you think about the future with your illness, what gives you strength?

These are my main sources of strength in difficult times:

#### EXAMPLES

*My friends • My family • My faith • My garden • Myself ("I just do it")*

### MY ABILITIES • What abilities are so critical to your life that you can't imagine living without them?

I want to keep going as long as I can...

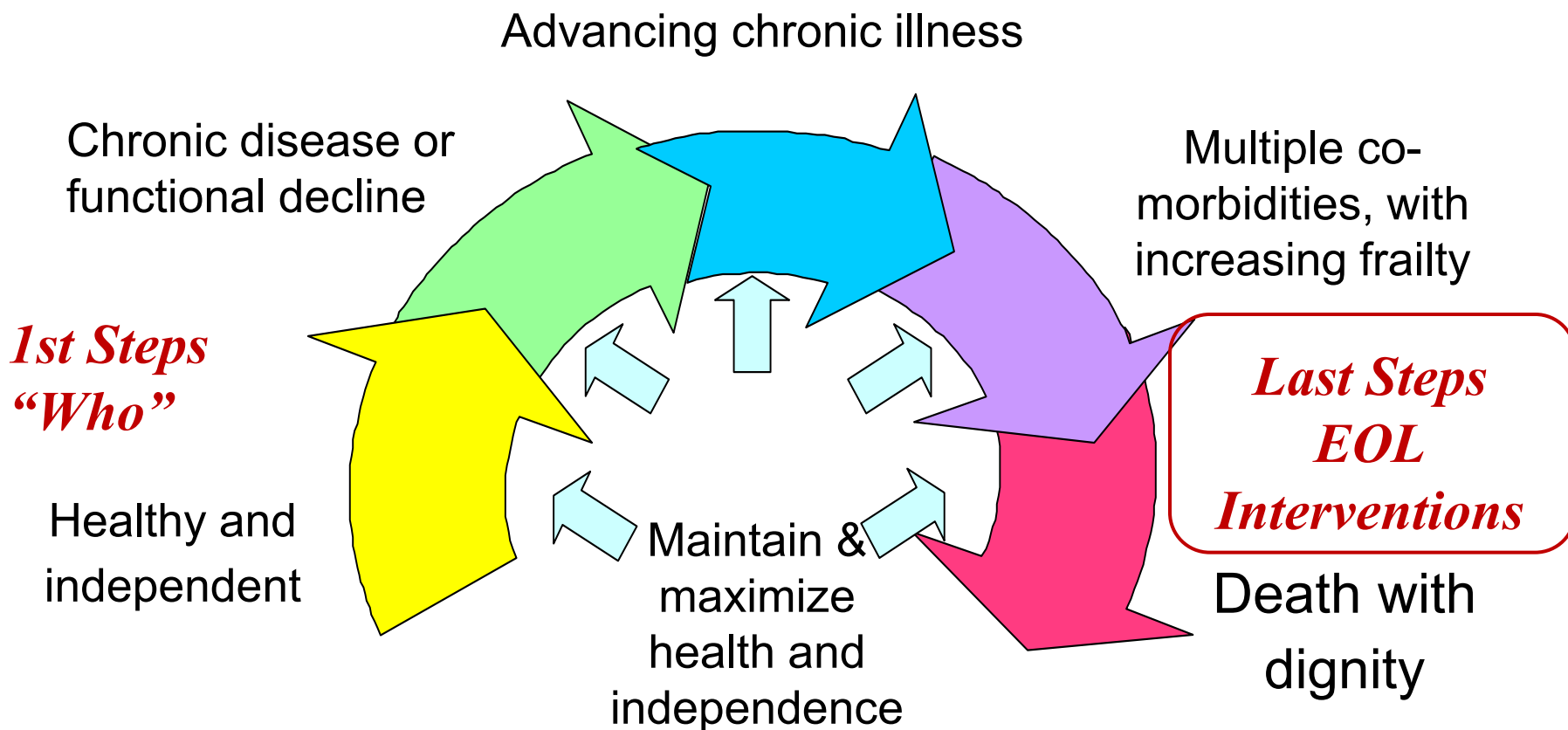
#### EXAMPLES

*As long as I can at least sit up on the bed and occasionally talk to my grandchildren • As long as I can eat ice cream and watch the football game on TV • As long as I can recognize my loved ones • As long as my heart is beating, even though I'm not conscious*

If you become sicker, which matters more to you: the possibility of a longer life, or the possibility of a better quality of life? Please explain.

## [The Conversation Project - Videos](#)

*Next Steps*  
*What Matters Most*



Adapted from Pat Bomba, MD Compassion and Support  
and Bud Hammes, PhD Gundersen Health System

<https://theconversationproject.org/>

# The Conversation Project

<https://theconversationproject.org/>

<https://theconversationproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/ConversationStarterGuide.pdf>

<https://theconversationproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/ChooseAProxyGuide.pdf>

<https://theconversationproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/BeAProxyGuide.pdf>

- **Serious Illness Workbook**

<https://theconversationproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/WhatMattersToMeWorkbook.pdf>