

**SPEAKER SERIES**  
**CHANGING THE CONVERSATION  
ON PALLIATIVE CARE**

**PALLIATIVE CARE:**  
***Effective Communication with  
Family, Caregivers & Providers***

Tuesday, September 10, 2024



CO-HOST

**Melissa Rosen**

**Director of National Outreach, Sharsharet**

**SPEAKER SERIES**  
**CHANGING THE CONVERSATION  
ON PALLIATIVE CARE**

Melissa K. Rosen, Sharsheret's Director of Training and Education, holds a master's degree in Jewish Communal Service from Brandeis University and has been working in the non-profit sector for over 30 years. Her professional experience includes informal education and programming, advocacy, and community outreach. Melissa's work has allowed her to facilitate unique and lasting connections among organizations in the diverse American non-profit community.

Melissa oversees community education throughout the country, training health care professionals, Jewish professionals, and Sharsheret's volunteers. She also manages the Sharsheret's Community Partnerships. Herself a two-time cancer survivor, she is passionate about the Jewish community and cancer support and advocacy.



**SHARSHERET**  
We stand with Israel.

## **WEBINAR AGENDA**

- ❖ WELCOME & OVERVIEW | Melissa Rosen, Director of Training and Education, Sharsheret
- ❖ PATIENT ADVOCATE PERSPECTIVE | Barbara Bigelow, Individual Patient Advocate, Metastatic Breast Cancer Alliance
- ❖ KEYNOTE SPEAKER | Caroline Cubbison, M.D., Dana-Farber Cancer Institute
- ❖ Q & A | Dr. Cubbison & Barbara Bigelow
- ❖ WRAP-UP | Melissa Rosen & All



CO-HOST

**BARBARA BIGELOW**

**PATIENT ADVOCATE, MBC ALLIANCE**

**SPEAKER SERIES**  
**CHANGING THE CONVERSATION  
ON PALLIATIVE CARE**

Barbara has had breast cancer for over 20 years, the last 8 as metastatic. Initially ER+, she mutated to Triple Negative MBC. A vocal advocate for patient research, she herself was in a clinical trial for immunotherapy that landed her in the hospital for 2 months, relearning how to walk and swallow while undergoing dialysis. Along the way she has also survived lung cancer and melanoma. Today she is the Vice President of Metavivor, committed to raising money to fund metastatic breast cancer research. She also blogs about her experiences using humor to inspire hope for others at The Cancer Chronicles.



FEATURED GUEST

**Caroline Cubbison, M.D.**

**Palliative Medicine, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute**

**SPEAKER SERIES**  
**CHANGING THE CONVERSATION  
ON PALLIATIVE CARE**

Dr. Caroline Cubbison is a palliative care specialist currently serving at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and Harvard Medical School in Boston, Massachusetts. She is committed to enhancing the quality of life for patients with cancer and other serious conditions through expert symptom management, assistance with communication, and coping support. Dr. Cubbison champions a patient-centric ethos, consistently striving to align medical interventions with individual values and goals. Beyond her clinical practice, she is engaged in national and global initiatives to raise awareness and broaden access to palliative care services, thus amplifying her impact on healthcare delivery worldwide.



# Palliative Care for People Living with Breast Cancer

Dr. Caroline Cubbison  
Palliative Care Physician



**Dana-Farber**  
Cancer Institute



“Palliative Care is the umbrella, not the rain”.  
-Dr. Camilla Zimmerman



# Roadmap

Palliative Care in a nutshell

Basics of expert pain management

Communication support

Patient examples

Tools you can access from home





## Myth:

- Palliative care is only for people who are nearing the end of life.

## Reality:

- More and more studies show that early palliative care **improves quality of life** for patients and their loved ones **regardless of stage of illness.**



# What is Palliative Care?

**Palliate = to alleviate suffering**





# Tailoring Palliative Care for Breast Cancer

- Younger patients
- Caregivers
- Don't want to burden others
- Active lifestyle



# Expert Symptom Management



# Expert Symptom Management

Pain

Neuropathy

Muscle and joint pain

Nausea

Anxiety



## Myth:

- All patients on receiving palliative care will be prescribed opioids or narcotic medications

## Reality:

- Palliative clinicians have **expert training** that allows them to **think outside the box** and **tailor** a pain management plan for an **individual** person's **lifestyle**



# Expert Pain Management

Adjuvant  
medications:

Anti-inflammatories, duloxetine,  
pregabalin, cannabinoids, topical  
medications and others

Interventions:

Radiation, minimally invasive nerve  
blocks, steroid injections

Alternative  
therapies:

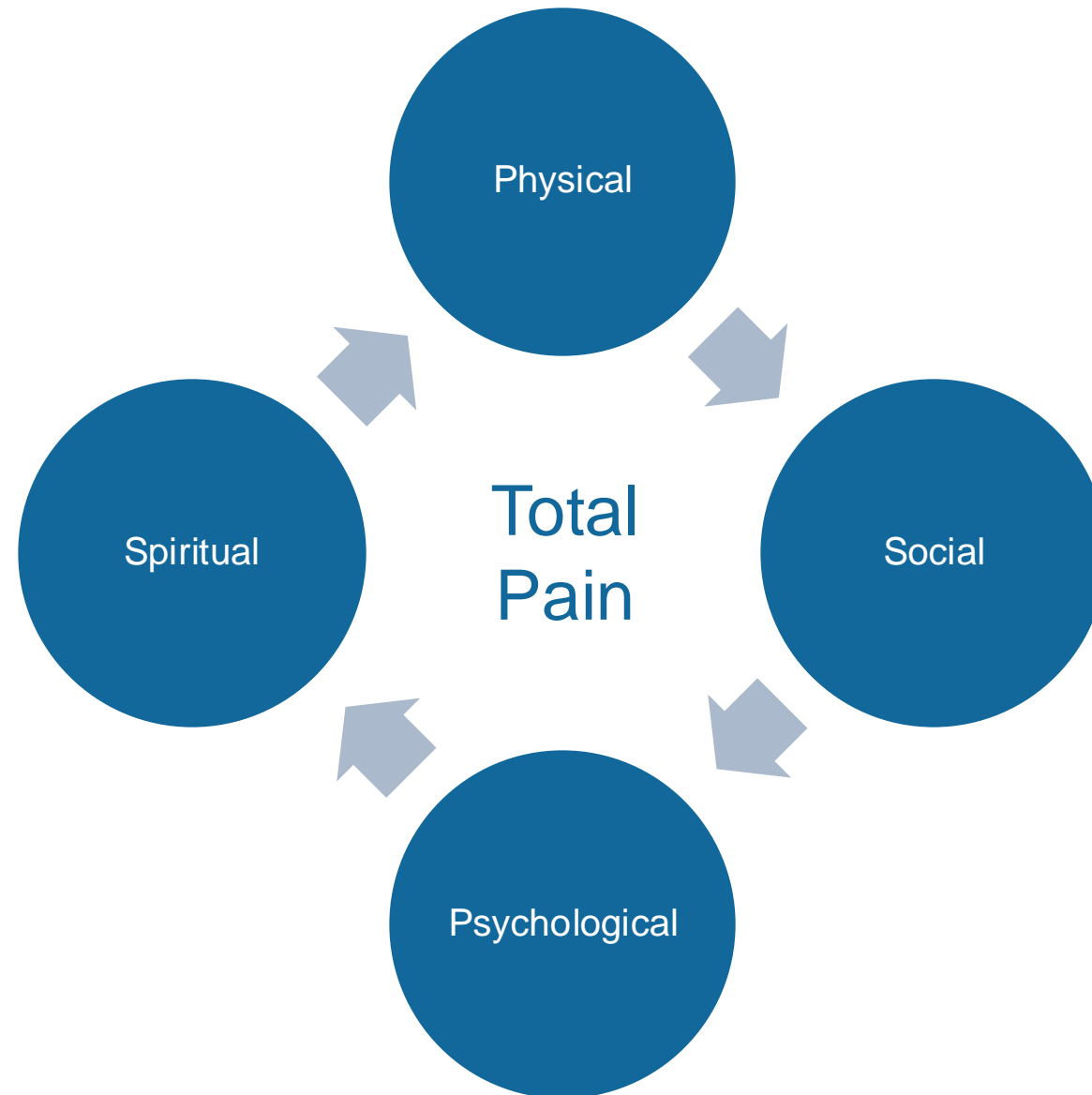
Acupuncture, massage, guided  
imagery, Reiki

Opioids:

Safely prescribed and closely  
monitored



# Emotional and Spiritual Support





# Think and Plan for the Future

Talk about hopes and worries

Think through important documents you can have prepared

Relieve distress around the future, so you can enjoy the present



# Communication Support:

What matters most to **you**?

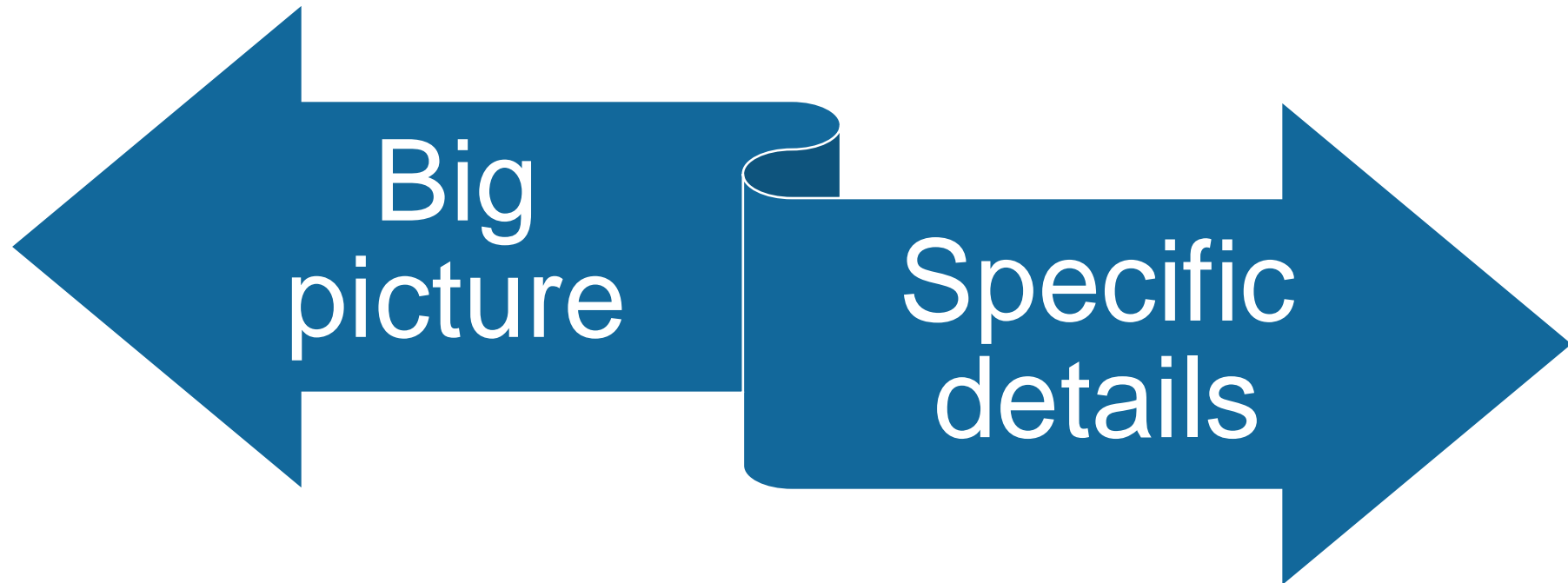


# Communication Support

- Understand a person's communication preferences
- Are there other people we should be communicating with?
- Are there differences in how we should be communicating with them?



# Differences in Communication Preferences

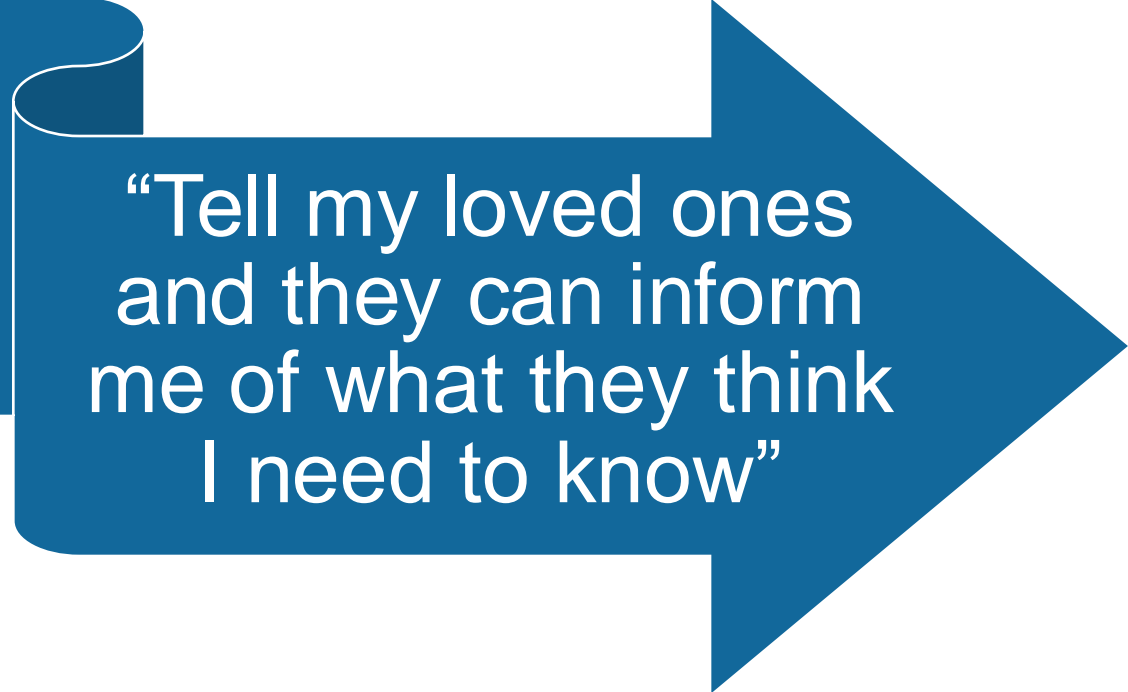




# Differences in Communication Preferences



“Tell me  
everything first”



“Tell my loved ones  
and they can inform  
me of what they think  
I need to know”



# Differences in Communication Preferences



Prognosis in  
terms of time

Prognosis in terms  
of how we expect  
you might feel



# Communication Support

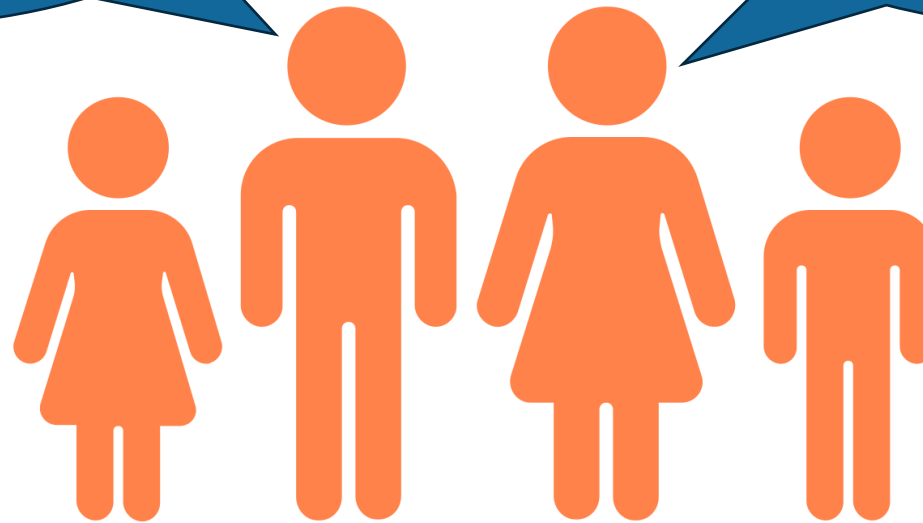
- Do you feel like you understand what is going on?
- Are there questions you want answers to?
- Would you benefit from support in talking to your loved ones about your health?




# Supporting Patients and Loved Ones

I would like to know her prognosis, so that I can help prepare our kids and family.


I don't want to know what my prognosis is. That information feels too scary.



# Supporting Patients and Medical Teams



I have no idea what any of this means, but I'm afraid to say that.



I'm saying something very complicated, at a fast pace, and with many medical terms.

# Communicating During Periods of Uncertainty





# Communication Tools

Team  
Meeting

Family  
Meeting



# Recommended tool you can access from home



# the conversation project



## What Matters to Me

A Workbook for People with Serious Illness

©2021 Ariadne Labs and The Conversation Project, an initiative of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI)

## 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

## 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...



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



- What are your concerns about medical treatments?



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



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



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





**Ask your oncologist if meeting with  
Palliative Care would benefit you.**





“Palliative Care is the umbrella, not the rain”.  
-Dr. Camilla Zimmerman



**Thank you.**



**Dana-Farber**  
Cancer Institute

**SPEAKER SERIES**

# CHANGING THE CONVERSATION ON PALLIATIVE CARE

## Q&A

**SPEAKER SERIES**  
**CHANGING THE CONVERSATION  
ON PALLIATIVE CARE**

**THANK YOU FOR JOINING US!**

**WATCH ALL WEBINARS:  
[MBCAlliance.org/SpeakerSeries](https://MBCAlliance.org/SpeakerSeries)**