Motivation for the Study

• 2011 caregiver study in Green County
  – #1 challenge: “communicating with professional service providers”
• Caregivers’ health literacy impacts the health and healthcare of the person they are helping
  – Limited resources available targeting improving effective communication between health care professionals, patients and caregivers

How can we fill this health literacy gap?

• Informal caregivers of older adults are resources that can create more productive interactions with members of the health care team
  – Chronic Care Model
  – Social Cognitive Theory
• Objective: develop educational program to enhance informal caregivers’ health communication and health care visit management skills
Care Talks Program Goals

• Build skills for preparing for an office visit, including developing a list of concerns/questions
• Discuss what to do during and immediately following a provider encounter
• Describe the health care professional’s (HCP) perspective and identify some of their barriers to effective communication
• Apply problem-solving strategies to several challenging communication situations.

The Care Talks Program

Three 2-hour sessions, one week apart; and one 2-hour booster session one month later

**Session 1**
• Trust Building/stories
• Barriers to HCP communication
• Preparing for an office visit

**Session 2**
• Guest physician
• Build skills – prep for, and maximizing time in, visit
• Model & Home practice

**Session 3**
• Effective Communication Skills/Strategies
• Asking key questions
• Problem solving approach
• Role play with feedback

**Session 4 (Booster)**
• Review strategies
• Challenging situations
• Community resources

---

Session 3 Care Talks Handout - Before, During, After an Appointment

**Before the Appointment**
1. Ask the person you are going to see if there is anything on their mind that they would like to talk about.
2. What does the person look like? Does their appearance change how you feel about them?
3. What do you think they might say? Prepare a list of questions.
4. Set your goals for the visit. Are you just here to be heard or do you have specific questions to address?
5. Be on time for your appointment.

**During the Appointment**
1. Say what you think and what you want to know.
2. Take the time to listen to the person you are seeing. Ask questions to understand their perspective.
3. The doctor has many duties. Be patient and courteous.
4. Keep track of what is being said.

**After the Appointment**
1. Write down what happened. It may help you remember what was said.
2. Call the person who saw you after the appointment.
3. Keep a record of your appointments and the topics discussed.
4. Follow up on what the doctor recommends.
5. Contact the clinic if you are not satisfied with the care you received.
6. If you are not satisfied with the care you received, you may file a complaint with the appropriate authority.
Primary Research Questions

Does the Care Talks program increase participants’ ability to:

• negotiate role with the person they help?
• develop a list of concerns (agenda) to discuss with the “doctor” and share them?
• summarize what they heard and identify main points after a visit?
• use “I” statements and ways to resolve conflict with a “doctor”?

Timeline

August 2013 – February 2014: Pilot study funded and initial team meetings, including caregiver advisory group

March - April 2014: Revisions to program materials (manual, handouts, surveys, posters)
April/May 2014: First Care Talks program in Green County

June – August 2014: Leader training and two additional program offerings at Monroe Clinic
August 2014 - present: Final follow-up telephonic interviews; data analysis ongoing

Care Talks: What have we learned so far?

• Recruitment
• Session length and content
• Booster session scenarios and benefit
• Preliminary data suggest that participants are more likely to:
  – prepare a list of questions/concerns for the doctor
  – ask questions about things they don’t understand
  – introduce themselves and explain their role
Participant Testimonials

I just had a doctor's visit for my husband; we had to go in for his checkup. And I used the methods I learned in your program and it really really helped. Me and the doctor had a better understanding and it went better than before.

After the last class I did an emergency file. It made me feel a lot more relaxed knowing that anytime I go out the door I can just grab that and I have what I need. Which I probably wouldn't have done or had all that I needed if I didn't take the class.

First of all I learned to listen, I sometimes am thinking ahead of the person I'm listening to, and I'm trying to tone that back and just listen, then think. And learning how to frame questions, so I use my time and the doctor's time efficiently and effectively.