



## Purpose and Goal

In a 2012 New England Journal of Medicine article, Dr. Michael Barry and Susan Edgman-Levitan introduced a concept of asking “What matters to you?” in addition to “What is the matter?” to promote shared decision making. The purpose of this initiative was to help increase clinicians awareness of important issues in their patients’ lives that could assist in creating customized plans of care. The Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) is continuing to build on this concept noting that is it key in creating deeply personal engagements with patients and their family members, creating a understanding of what really matters to them, and is the foundation of developing partnerships that can enhance the patient’s relationship with their health care provider and results in improved healthcare outcomes.

Utilizing the concept of “What Matters” the Network has created 10 communication cards with the purpose to help dialysis staff become comfortable asking open ended questions to the patients they provide care for each day. These open ended questions are designed based on a “What Matters” philosophy and provides pointers and examples in supporting both positive and negative responses. The goal is help improve communication by raising the awareness of what is important to the patient. In addition it works to help the patient feel comfortable asking any member of the staff for assistance. You are not solving their concerns, but helping them verbalize what they are, gain an understanding of what the patients comprehensive needs are and assisting them when possible with the knowledge or referral to another team member when applicable to create a plan to address these needs. Through improved communication and a better understanding of what matters to our patients we can align resources to assist them in meeting their personal health care goals.

## Intervention Materials:

- 10 Communication Cards
- Staff Weekly Survey (Paper)
- Monthly Summary Survey (Electronic)

## How to Use the Materials:

1. At the start of the week, direct patient care staff members (up to 10) on each shift will select a card. This card will be their “**Question of the Week**” to become comfortable using. Staff should attempt to engage the patient in conversation surrounding the intent of the question on the card. Each question is intended to have a better understanding of a different aspect of the patient experience. On one side is an open ended question and on the other an example of a positive and negative response from a patient with response pointers.



**Example Question: How are you feeling about beginning your treatment?**

**Positive response:** *“I’m very scared, but I’ve been reading and working to understand what is going to happen with my body”*

**Pointer:** *Engage with the patient using understanding and compassion*

**Example Response:** *It is normal to have questions, fears and concerns relating to beginning treatment. But you are correct; fear will dissipate with knowledge and understanding of what is happening to you and your body.*

**Negative response:** *“I don’t want to talk about it! This is not my choice and I am very scared”.*

**Pointer:** *Acknowledge patient’s fears by showing empathy and compassion*

**Example Response:** *It is very normal to have fears about the unknown. Sometimes it really helps to speak with your health care team about your concerns and fears. Would you like to speak with someone in private to work on decreasing your fears and anxieties?*

2. Provide the direct patient care staff participating with the **ICH CAHPS “What Matters” Weekly Survey**, this will allow them to report on the number of patients the intervention reached during the week, common concerns shared by patients, their level in comfort in asking the question and how patients responded to the question as well as any referrals or other support provided to help patients create a plan to reach their personal goals.
3. Weekly, collect the **ICH CAHPS “What Matters” Weekly Survey** from staff. Ask staff to select a new question card for the next week.
4. Monthly, complete the **ICH CAHPS “What Matters” Monthly Electronic Survey** to summarize the staff and patient experience utilizing the communication cards and submit the hard copy **ICH CAHPS “What Matters” Weekly Survey** to the ESRD Network. This should be completed for each reporting period on the following schedule:

Due Date	Reporting Period
August 30 <sup>th</sup>	July 31 – August 27
September 27 <sup>th</sup>	August 28 – September 24

5. Celebrate your success with your staff and patients! You have the ability to make a difference in the lives of patients with ESRD.