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Joan, Oncology Nurse

[Joan]

The first action step in the negotiating process is gathering information. When you negotiate for anything, it is important to be as prepared as possible. This means gathering as much information about the negotiation as you can, as well as answers to questions like: What do you know about the people you are negotiating with? What are their values? What do they hope to gain? What are your needs and rights?

[Joan]

Don't be afraid to ask questions, even during the course of a negotiation. Sometimes people are afraid of "looking dumb" and so they don't ask questions. You really have nothing to lose by asking a question. If you don't know something, you will never get an answer without asking. Pretending to know the answer is usually worse than asking the question.

[Joan]

Check the information you receive. Make sure the information is current and comes from a reliable source. Your health-care team can help you make sure the information you find is reliable.

[Narrator]

If you haven't already done so, you may want to listen to the Cancer Survival Toolbox program entitled "Finding Information." That entire program is devoted to finding the information you need. After you have gathered information, the second action step in the negotiation process is to plan your agenda. You have to decide what you will be negotiating for. Do this by making an agenda, or a plan of action.

[Joan]

When I work with cancer survivors, I suggest that they make a list of the things they want to find out and talk about. It's also helpful to number the list in the order that you want to discuss each item on your list. It is often best to begin with the items you feel the most comfortable with. Decide how much time you want to spend on each item. Be sure everyone agrees on the amount of time to be spent on the negotiation. If you are negotiating with your doctor, let the office staff know as far in advance as possible that there are items you want time to discuss. That way, they can set the schedule so that the doctor is not rushed and other patients are not kept waiting. Many doctors would also appreciate your emailing them your list of questions in advance. This gives them time to answer or address your questions fully. They may also be able to quickly email you some of the answers, saving time for both of you.

[Narrator]

Step 3 in the negotiation process: set your limits. These limits define what you are willing to give up in order to get what you want, and mark the point at which you are willing to walk away from a negotiation.

[Joan]

You must be willing to stand by your limits. If you don't, they will not be respected, and the other person will be confused about what your true limits are. Before reaching your limit, there is a

point, sometimes called a resistance point, where there is still some room for negotiation. When someone comes close to reaching your limit, let them know so that you can both explore other options.

[Joan]

It is helpful to write down your limits before beginning a negotiation. The written record can serve to remind you of your limits and warn you when the other person is getting close to the point at which you will no longer negotiate.

[Narrator]

Step 4 in the negotiation process: be aware of your inner voice.

[Joan]

During a negotiation, you may experience anger, resentment, or worry. These -- and any other strong emotions you may feel -- are a clue that you need to pay attention. Try not to let your emotions get out of control during the negotiating process. Try to analyze what was said right before you became aware of feeling an emotion. This is a clue that something does not feel right about the negotiation. Don't be afraid to stop and ask a question, review some information or just ask for a time-out -- a pause in the negotiation so that you can gather your thoughts.

[Narrator]

Step five in the negotiation process is to create a win-win solution, if you can.

[Joan]

If you are aware of your values and limits and are willing to seek creative solutions, you can generally create a win-win solution to any negotiation. It is important to gather as much information about the values and needs of the person with whom you are negotiating so that you understand what their limits are. Keep your values in mind. Goals can be reached in different ways. The path is not as important as keeping your values as you travel the path.

[Narrator]

You should feel prepared to negotiate about various aspects of your cancer care. For example, you should be able to tell your doctors and nurses if you would like to have other doctors or health-care providers involved in your treatment. Let's hear how Anna, a cancer survivor who wants to try a new treatment, learns how to negotiate with her cancer doctor, who does not initially favor this new treatment.

[Narrator]

Anna was diagnosed with cancer several years ago. Targeted therapy is used by a lot of people nowadays, but at the time it was brand new.