Responding to Emotion

Advance care planning conversations can be emotional for both patients and providers.

Here are tools to navigate these emotional moments, and help you have proactive responses to patients’ needs.

PEARLS are responses that you can have ready when the conversation gets difficult.

PEARLS®

- **Partnership**: Let’s work together on this.
- **Emotion**: You say you’re frustrated.
- **Apology/Acknowledge**: I’m sorry that I upset you.
- **Respect**: I give you a lot of credit for getting through this as you have.
- **Legitimization**: Most people in your position would feel the same way.
- **Support/Silence**: I’m going to stick with you through this.

Using non-verbal cues can be effective ways to acknowledge emotion.

**Non-Verbal Emotional Cues**

- Pause
- Touch
- Facial expression
- Eye contact
- Tone of voice
- Space

Questions? Email advancecareplanning@stanford.edu