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Optimizing Patient-Centered Communication Across the Cancer Control Continuum: The Role of Affective Science?

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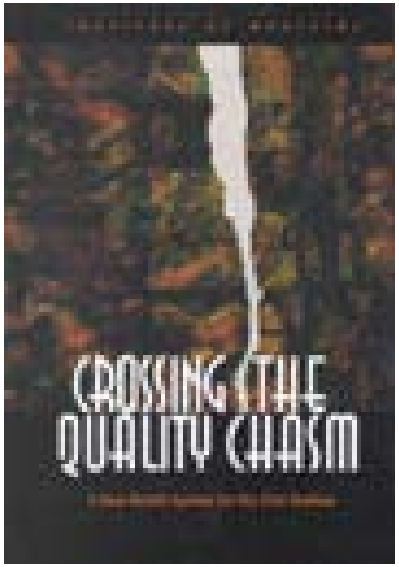
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
National Institutes of Health

Quality of Care



Aims for the 21st Century Health Care System

- **Safe**
- **Effective**
- **Patient-centered**
- **Timely**
- **Efficient**
- **Equitable**

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NCI Research Priority

- NCI supports research focused on facilitating the measurement, monitoring, and improvement of patient-centered cancer care with an aim to minimize the cancer burden

- An area of emphasis: communication between patients/family and members of health care delivery teams

http://outcomes.cancer.gov/areas/pcc

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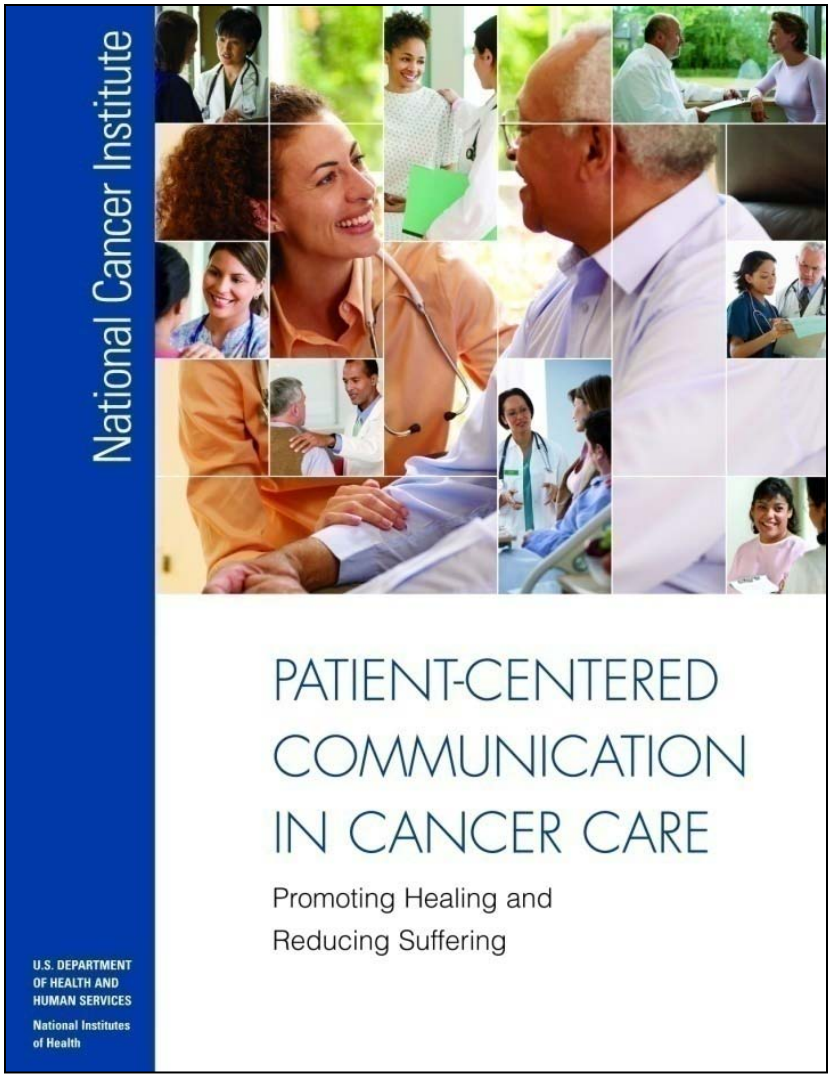
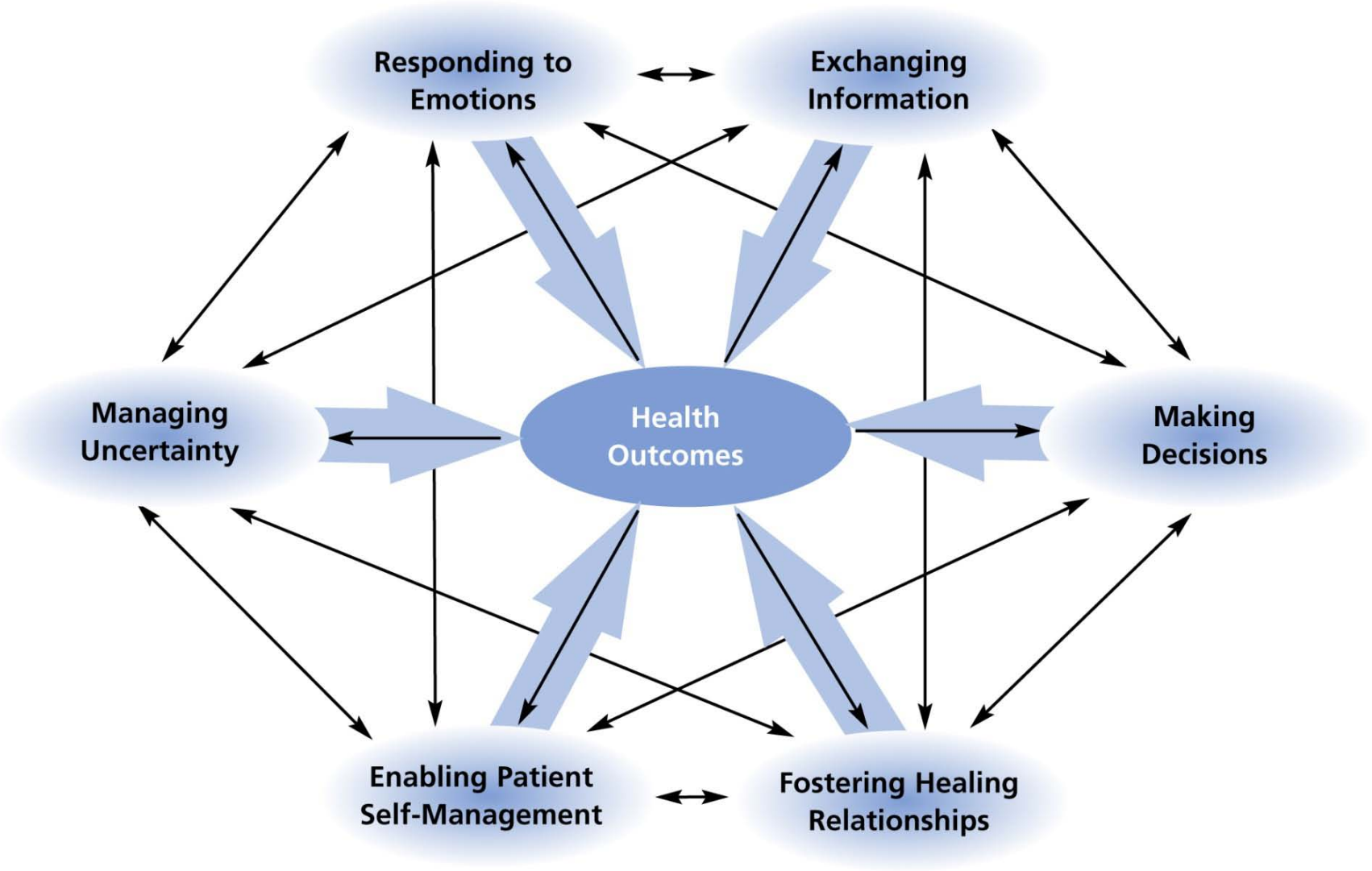
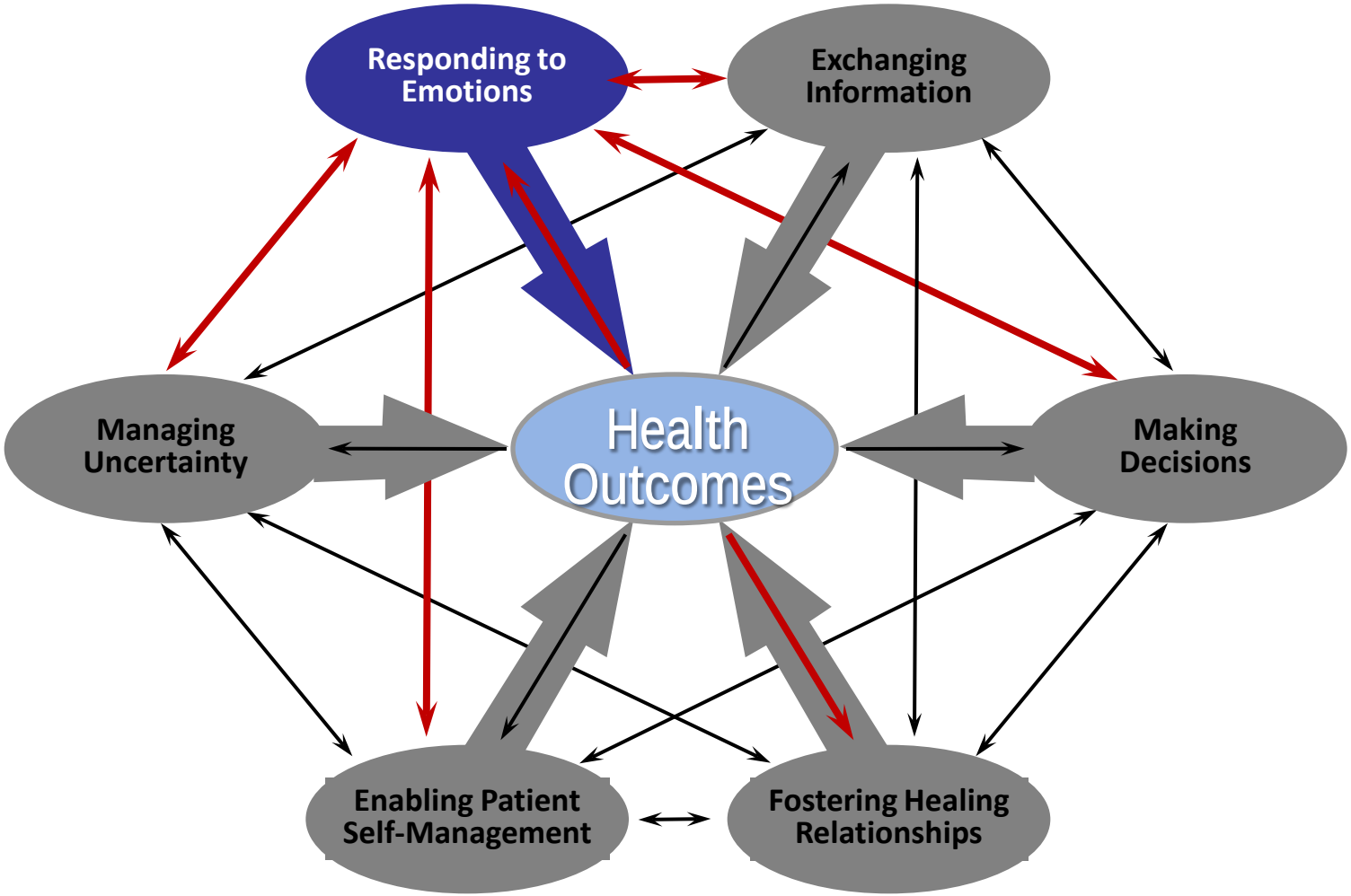
Patient-Centered Communication



Epstein R.M., & Street R.L., Jr. (2007). *Patient-centered communication in cancer care: promoting healing and reducing suffering.* Bethesda, MD: National Cancer Institute, NIH Publication No. 07-6225.

Patient-Centered Communication Functions

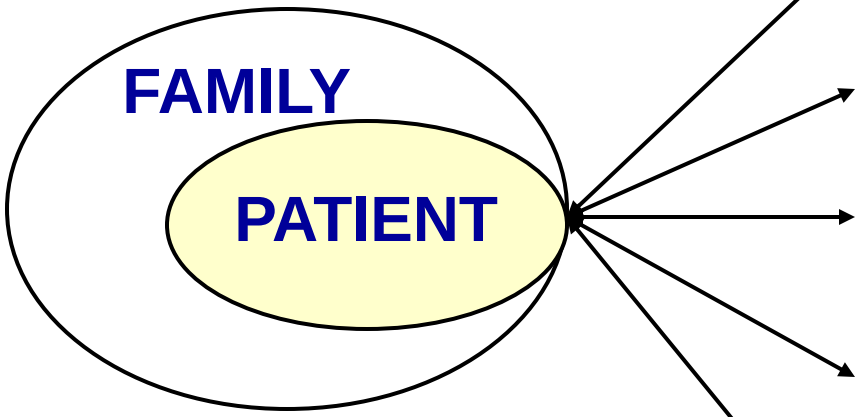



Responding to Emotions
Exchanging Information
Managing Uncertainty
Health Outcomes
Making Decisions
Enabling Patient Self-Management
Fostering Healing Relationships

Understanding the Clinical Context of Cancer-related Care

Cancer-related Care:
A Complex Web of Communication

PRE-DX → DX → RX → POST-RX ⇢ EOL



Inpatient, Outpatient,
Multiple Organizations

In person, Telephone, E-mail

MULTIPLE CLINICIANS

- Primary Care Physician
- Oncologists
- Genetic Counselors
- Surgeon
- Nurses
- Pharmacists
- Social Workers
- CAM Practitioners
- Lab Technicians

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Cancer-related Care

- Conversations between patient/family and multiple clinical teams
  - Across multiple healthcare organizations
  - Across different care settings
  - Across different communication media
- It is often left up to the patient to make sense of all these conversations
- Patients may or may not be aware of communication within and across clinical teams

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Cancer-related Care

- Conversations are influenced by several predisposing, enabling, and reinforcing factors at the individual, group/team, organization/system level, for example:
  - Patient/family social network
  - Clinician training
  - Team functioning and norms
  - Organization culture
  - Reimbursement policies

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Cancer-related Care

- Conversations within the context of "emotionally charged" situations
  - Test indicating predisposition to cancer
  - Abnormal cancer screening test
  - Confirmed dx of cancer
  - Test suggesting treatment is not likely to work or remission not likely to last
  - Dx of new primary or cancer recurrence
  - Transition to end of life care

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Cancer-related Care

- Nature of conversations and their impact may vary across the age spectrum
  - Pediatrics
  - Adolescent and Young Adults
  - Adults
  - Seniors

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Challenges

- Measurement
- Longitudinal monitoring
- Interventions: Multi-level
  - Individual
  - Team
  - Organization