



## Helpful Resources:

A special thanks to **Patti Mulvania, RN, BSN, CPTC**, Senior Faculty at Gift of Life Institute and **Laura Siminoff, PhD**, Professor of Public Health at the College of Public Health of Temple University for their contributions to this publication.

### The Donation Conversation as a Process: How Research and Experience can be Used to Develop Evidence-Based Standards of Practice

TODAY'S PANELISTS



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For a more detailed overview, review

a recent presentation featured in The Alliance's Advancement Learning Series Portfolio on: "[The Donation Conversation as a Process: How Research and Experience can be Used to Develop Evidence-Based Standards of Practice](#)" hosted on January 10, 2023.

For additional references & resources; or to learn more, please visit:

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## The Donation Conversation as a Process

The critical aspect of a Family Donation Conversation is recognizing that it is a **PROCESS** and not an event.

### 5 Phases of the Family Donation Conversation Process

1

- Timely referral of potential donor to OPO (before Brain Death testing begins and withdrawal decisions are made)
- OPO conducts onsite fact and information gathering
- OPO and hospital teams huddle and collaborate on plan

2

- Family is given grave prognosis by physician
- OPO and hospital teams collaborate to provide support and meet the family's needs
- Hospital team continues to help the family understand brain death / non-survivable injury

3

- Family readiness assessment is done by the OPO and hospital team
- Timing of the donation conversation is determined based on family readiness, which could be before BD determination
- Physician gives the family news of Brain Death or guides the withdrawal decision (provides family grief support)

4

- The donation conversation is led by the OPO; questions are encouraged, inspiration provided
- Informed, proactive, enduring decision is made by the family
- If yes to donation, gratitude is shared and next steps preparation begins; If no to donation, explore further to ensure proactive, informed decision then share gratitude for consideration

5

- OPO plans for closure
- Final family needs are assessed and met
- Aftercare provided to the family by OPO

### Family Readiness Assessment for Donation Conversation

#### Definition of Family Readiness

An assessment of a family's understanding in which it has been determined that the family:

- Understands that their loved one has died, or that they have suffered an irreversible injury for which there is no hope of meaningful survival, and
- Ideally, they have been prepared by the best means possible to participate in conversation to make a proactive, informed, enduring donation decision.

### Triggers Indicating Time for Family Donation Conversation

Family Understands Death, or non-survivable nature of injury (e.g., hold no hope for survival)

Brain Death is pronounced and the family verbalizes understanding of prognosis

Decision is made to limit, decelerate, or withdraw treatment

Healthcare team shares donation opportunity with family (not optimal process)

Family brings up donation

Pulmonary or hemodynamic instability (which may compromise the family's and their loved one's ability to donate)

#### Stressful Aspects of the Authorization Environment (based on feedback shared by families)

- ICU Setting
- Feeling lost or unsupported
- Threat of losing loved one
- Adjusting to the loss
- Confirmation of brain death
- Shock/Surprise of being asked to donate

#### Factors that Mitigate the Family's Stress

- Support of family and friends
- Being able to spend time with the patient
- Receiving information about emotional support
- Adequate time to understand the patient's condition
- Preparation for donation request / offer
- Displays of empathy
- Quality of communication and patient care

### Donation Conversation Goals

1. **A Well-Informed Decision** ensures that the family is aware of the powerful significance of the decision they are making; this requires sensitivity and careful attention to protecting the family from feeling pressured in any way.
2. **A Proactive Decision** is characterized as a decision that the family and the donor would have made on an ordinary day, at a time when they had full knowledge of the impact and meaning of the decision, that is consistent with their values and beliefs.
3. **An Enduring Decision** is one that the family can look back on in the years to come and feel confident that it was the right decision for them, and one that they would make again.



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