

Empowering Families - Critical Caregiving Conversations for the Sandwich Generation

October 14, 2024

By Candace Dellacona

In this episode of The Sandwich Generation Survival Guide, host Candace Dellacona is joined by Dr. Ashwini Bapat, a hospice and palliative care physician from EpioneMD, who brings a wealth of knowledge from her training at Tufts, Yale, and Harvard. Dr. Bapat delves into the complexities of caring for loved ones with serious illnesses, highlighting the vital importance of engaging in meaningful conversations about living with such conditions. She clarifies the distinction between palliative care, which provides an extra layer of support at any illness stage, and hospice care, focused on holistic support during the final months of life. Families are encouraged to approach these difficult discussions with a listening mindset rather than an agenda, paving the way for open dialogues about care preferences, future living arrangements, and the complexities of denial.

Dr. Bapat stresses the need for proper healthcare documentation, including proxies and living wills, to ensure that individuals' medical wishes are honored. She also advocates for collaboration between caregivers and medical teams, urging the creation of a "caregiver action plan" that reflects not just medical needs but also the patient's joys and lifestyle preferences. Listeners will learn the importance of sharing caregiving responsibilities among family members and the necessity of seeking help to alleviate the burden.

Additionally, Dr. Bapat emphasizes the value of early conversations to set clear expectations and minimize conflicts within families. Drawing from her personal experiences as both a physician and a daughter, she underscores the significance of being present and truly listening to loved ones, rather than rushing to take action. This episode is filled with invaluable insights, empowering the Sandwich Generation to approach caregiving with compassion, communication, and collaboration.

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