

Serious Illness Conversation Guide

CLINICIAN STEPS

Set up

- Thinking in advance
- Is this okay?
- Hope for best, prepare for worst
- Benefit for patient/family
- No decisions necessary today

Guide (right column)

Act

- Affirm commitment
- Make recommendations about next steps
 - Acknowledge medical realities
 - Summarize key goals/priorities
 - Describe treatment options that reflect both
- Document conversation
- Provide patient with Family Communication Guide

CONVERSATION GUIDE

Understanding

What is your understanding now of where you are with your illness?

Information preferences

How much information about what is likely to be ahead with your illness would you like from me?

FOR EXAMPLE:

Some patients like to know about time, others like to know what to expect, others like to know both.

Prognosis

Share prognosis as a range, tailored to information preferences

Goals

If your health situation worsens, what are your most important goals?

Fears / Worries

What are your biggest fears and worries about the future with your health?

Function

What abilities are so critical to your life that you can't imagine living without them?

Trade-offs

If you become sicker, how much are you willing to go through for the possibility of gaining more time?

Family

How much does your family know about your priorities and wishes?

(Suggest bringing family and/or health care agent to next visit to discuss together)