SERIOUS ILLNESS CONVERSATION GUIDE - SURROGATE

SETUP

I’d like to talk about where things are with your ____’s [e.g. wife’s, husband’s, other relationship description or name] illness and where things might be going. Is that okay?

ASSESS

What is your understanding now of where things are with your ____’s illness?

How much information about what is likely ahead with his/her illness would you like from me?

SHARE PROGNOSIS

I’d like to share my understanding of where things are now with your ____’s illness.

*NOTE: It is not necessary to use all three SHARE statements – choose based upon CONTEXT of the situation. Remember to PAUSE to assess/respond to emotion or surrogate questions.

Uncertain: It can be difficult to predict what will happen with ____’s illness. I hope he/she will be stable for a long time, but I’m worried that he/she could get sicker quickly, and I think it’s important to prepare for that possibility.

OR

Time: I wish we were not in this situation, but I am worried that time might be as short as (days- weeks, weeks-months, months to a year).

OR

Function: I hope this is not the case, but I’m worried that this may be as strong as your ____ feels, and that things are likely to get more difficult for him/her.

EXPLORE

What is your sense of what your ____’s most important goals are if his/her health situation worsens?

What do you think your ____’s biggest fears and worries are about the future with his/her health?

What gives your ____ strength in difficult times?

What abilities are so critical to your ____’s life that he/she could not imagine living without them?

If your ____ became sicker, how much do you think he/she would be willing to go through for the possibility of gaining more time?

How much do your ____’s loved ones know about his/her priorities and wishes?

CLOSE

I’ve heard you say ____. Keeping that in mind, and what we know about your ____’s illness, I recommend that we ____. This will help us make sure that your ____’s treatment plans reflect what’s important to him/her.

How does this plan seem to you?

We will do everything we can to help you and your ____ through this.