

Serious Illness Conversation Guide

SETUP

I'd like to talk about what is ahead with your illness and do some thinking in advance about what is important to you so that I can make sure we provide you with the care you want. **Is that okay?**

ASSESS

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

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

SHARE PROGNOSIS

I want to share with you my **understanding** of where things are with your illness.

Uncertain: It can be difficult to predict what will happen with your illness. I **hope** you will continue to live well for a long time, but I'm **worried** that you could get sick quickly, and I think it is important to prepare for that possibility.

OR

Time: I **wish** we were not in this situation, but I'm **worried** that time may be as short as ____ (*express as a range, e.g. days to weeks, weeks to months, months to a year*).

OR

Function: I **hope** that this is not the case, but I'm **worried** that this may be as strong as you will feel, and things are likely to get more difficult.

EXPLORE

What are your most important **goals** if your health situation worsens?

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

What gives you **strength** as you think about the future with your illness?

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

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

How much do your **loved ones** know about your priorities and wishes?

CLOSE

I've heard you say _____. Keeping that in mind, and what we know about your illness, I **recommend** that we _____. This will help us make sure that your treatment plans reflect what's important to you.

How does this plan seem to you? **We will do everything we can** to help you through this.

Handoff

To colleague: "I talked with the patient about _____. I learned _____. I think they would benefit from talking with you about _____."