

Serious Illness Conversation Guide

Social Work & Case Management

SET UP | I'd like to **talk together** about what's happening with your health and **what matters to you**.
Would this be okay?

ASSESS | To make sure I share information that's helpful to you, can you tell me **your understanding** of what's going on with your health now?

How much **information about what might be ahead** with your health would be helpful?

OPTIONAL SECTION

ANTICIPATORY GUIDANCE | I want to share **my understanding** of where things are with your health: **[Choose one]**

Uncertain: It can be difficult to predict what will happen. **I hope you will feel as well as you can** for a long time, and we will work toward that goal. **It's also possible that you could get sick quickly**, and I think it's important that **we prepare** for that.

Function: It can be difficult to predict what will happen. **I hope you will feel as well as you can** for a long time, and we will work toward that goal. **It's also possible that it may get harder to do things** because of your illness, and I think it's important that **we prepare** for that.

Pause: Allow silence. Validate and explore emotions.

EXPLORE | If your health gets worse, what are your **most important goals**?

What are your biggest **worries**?

What **gives you strength** as you think about the future?

What **activities** bring joy and meaning to your life that you can't imagine living without?

If your health gets worse, **how much would you be willing to go through** for the possibility of more time?

How much do the **people closest to you** know about your priorities and wishes for your care?

Having talked about all of this, **what are your hopes** for your health?

CLOSE | I've heard you say _____. Keeping this in mind, and what we know about your health, I **recommend** that we _____. I will also pass this information to the rest of your healthcare team. This will help us make sure that **your care plan reflects 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
Key Clinicians**

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