# Serious Illness Conversation Guide

| Step | Script |
|---|---|
| *Introduce* | "I'd like to talk with you about what is ahead with your illness and what is most important to you, so that I can make sure we provide you with care that matches your values- **is this okay**?" |
| *Prognosticate* | *Set up before you give prognosis.*<br><br>"What is your **understanding** of your illness?"<br><br>"How much **information** about what to expect with your illness would be helpful for you?"<br><br>"Would it be ok if I share **my understanding** of what lies ahead with your illness…"<br><br>*Choose one prognostication statement from below or give headline.*<br><br>*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, and I'm also **worried** that you could get sick quickly or unexpectdly (or even die from your disease)."<br>--OR--<br>*Time*: "I am **worried** that something serious like _____ may happen in the next few (wks/mths/yrs)."<br>--OR--<br>*Function*: "I'm **worried** that this may be as strong as you will feel, and things are likely to get worse overtime." |
| *Expect Emotion* | "You seem surprised."<br>"I can't even imagine…"<br>"I am impressed that…"<br>"I am here to help you through this."<br>"Tell me more…" |
| *Map out what's important* | "Knowing this information, what is **most important to you** if your health worsens?"<br>"When thinking about the future, what would you like to be **doing**?"<br>"What would be an **unacceptable quality of life** for you, or a life worse than death?"<br>"When thinking about your health, what are your biggest **fears and worries**?"<br>"Has anyone in your life been **seriously ill** or even died?" "How does this impact your decisions?"<br>"What gives you **strength** as you think about the future with your illness?" |
| *Align* | "It sounds like _____ is really important to you. Keeping that in mind, and what we know about your illness, I believe we can help make sure your treatment plans reflect what's important to you." |
| *Plan* | "Would it be okay if I make a recommendation?"<br>"Based on what you have shared with me, **I recommend _____**."<br>"How does this plan seem to you?" |

# Serious Illness Conversation Framework

| Step | Description | Skills |
|------|-------------|--------|
| *Introduce* | **Set up the conversation**<br>• Introduce purpose<br>• Prepare for future decisions | *Foundational*<br>*Ask permission* |
| *Prognosticate* | **Assess understanding and preferences**<br>• Provide context for the conversation<br><br>**Share prognosis** tailored to preferences:<br>• Express prognosis as a range, e.g. days to weeks, weeks to months, months to a year<br>• Share prognosis framed as a "wish/worry", "hope/worry" statement | *ASK: Patient/family understanding*<br>*ASK: Permission to share information*<br>*TELL: Deliver a **HEADLINE** with information + meaning*<br>*ASK: Check for understanding or agreement* |
| *Expect Emotion* | Allow silence, explore emotion<br>Emotion means they heard the reframe | *Naming*<br>*Understanding*<br>*Respecting*<br>*Supporting*<br>*Explore* |
| *Map out what's important* | **Explore key topics**<br>• Goals<br>• Critical abilities<br>• Tradeoffs<br>• Fears, worries<br>• Sources of Strength | *Values*<br>*Activities*<br>*Living Well*<br>*Uncertainties/Worries*<br>*Experience with Illness*<br>*Strength/Story*<br><br>*"What else?", Follow-up*<br>*Bookmark, to keep on task* |
| *Align* | **Summarize**<br>• Affirm commitment<br>• Make sure you heard it correctly | *Reflective statements* |
| *Plan* | **Close the conversation**<br>• Make a recommendation<br>• Check in with patient<br>• Document your conversation<br>• Communicate with key clinicians and patient communicates with loved ones | *Ask permission*<br>*Show your work*<br>*"Because you said X, I recommend Y"* |

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