

# Serious Illness Conversation Guide

Step	Script
<b>Introduce</b>	<p>“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- <b>is this okay?</b>”</p>
<b>Prognosticate</b>	<p>“What is your <b>understanding</b> of your illness?”</p> <p>“How much <b>information</b> about what to expect with your illness would be helpful for you?”</p> <p>“Would it be ok if I share <b>my understanding</b> of what lies ahead with your illness...”</p> <p><i>Uncertain:</i> “It can be difficult to predict what will happen with your illness. I <b>hope</b> you will continue to live well for a long time, and I’m also <b>worried</b> that you could get sick quickly or unexpectedly (or even die from your disease).” OR <i>Time:</i> “<b>I wish</b> we were not in this situation, I am <b>worried</b> that time may be as short as ____ (express in ranges weeks to months, months to years).” OR <i>Function:</i> “<b>I hope</b> that this is not the case, I’m <b>worried</b> that this may be as strong as you will feel, and things are likely to get more difficult overtime.”</p>
<b>Expect Emotion</b>	<p>“You seem surprised.”</p> <p>“I can’t even imagine...”</p> <p>“I am impressed that...”</p> <p>“I am here to help you through this.”</p> <p>“Tell me more...”</p>
<b>Map out what’s important</b>	<p>“Knowing this information, what is <b>most important to you</b> if your health worsens?”</p> <p>“When thinking about the future, what would you like to be <b>doing?</b>”</p> <p>“What would be an <b>unacceptable quality of life</b> for you, or a life worse than death?”</p> <p>“When thinking about your health, what are your biggest <b>fears and worries?</b>”</p> <p>“Has anyone in your life been <b>seriously ill</b> or even died?” “How does this impact your decisions?”</p> <p>“What gives you <b>strength</b> as you think about the future with your illness?”</p>
<b>Align</b>	<p>“It sounds like ____ is really important to you.”</p>
<b>Plan</b>	<p>“Thank you for sharing that with me. I’d like to reflect together on what you’ve shared and make a plan forward. Would that be ok?”</p> <p>“Based on what you have shared with me, <b>I recommend</b> ____.”</p> <p>“Does this sound ok? Is there anything else we should think about?”</p>

# Serious Illness Conversation Framework

Step	Description	Skills
<b>Introduce</b>	<b>Set up the conversation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce purpose</li> <li>Prepare for future decisions</li> </ul>	<i>Foundational/Rapport building</i> <i>Ask permission</i>
	<b>Assess understanding and preferences</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide context for the conversation</li> </ul> <b>Share prognosis</b> tailored to preferences: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Express prognosis as a range, e.g. days to weeks, weeks to months, months to a year</li> <li>Share prognosis framed as a “wish/worry”, “hope/worry” statement</li> </ul>	<i>ASK: Patient/family understanding</i> <i>ASK: Permission to share information</i> <i>TELL: Deliver a <b>prognosis</b> with information + meaning</i> <i>ASK: Check for understanding or agreement</i>
<b>Expect Emotion</b>	Allow silence, explore emotion Emotion means they heard the reframe	<i>Naming</i> <i>Understanding</i> <i>Respecting</i> <i>Supporting</i> <i>Explore</i>
<b>Map out what’s important</b>	<b>Explore key topics</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Goals</li> <li>Critical abilities</li> <li>Tradeoffs</li> <li>Fears, worries</li> <li>Sources of Strength</li> </ul>	<i>Values</i> <i>Activities</i> <i>Living Well</i> <i>Uncertainties/Worries</i> <i>Experience with Illness</i> <i>Strength/Story</i>  <i>“What else?”</i> , <i>Tell me more</i> <i>Bookmark, to keep on task</i>
<b>Align</b>	<b>Summarize</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affirm commitment</li> <li>Make sure you heard it correctly</li> </ul>	<i>Reflective statements</i>
<b>Plan</b>	<b>Close the conversation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make a recommendation</li> <li>Check in with patient</li> <li>Document your conversation</li> <li>Communicate with key clinicians and patient communicates with loved ones</li> </ul>	<i>Ask permission</i> <i>Show your work</i> <i>“Because you said X, I recommend Y”</i>