

Serious Illness Conversation Guide Aotearoa

Stage	Patient-tested language
<p>SET-UP</p>	<p>“We want to make sure you have the best care possible. To do this it would be good to talk about what is happening with your health, what might be ahead and what things are important to you? Is that OK?”</p> <p>“This is an important conversation. Would you like someone to be here with you?”</p>
<p>ASSESS</p>	<p>“To make sure we are on the same page, can you tell me your understanding of what’s happening with your health at the moment?”</p> <p>“In terms of your health, how much information about what might happen in the future would you like from me?”</p>
<p>SHARE</p>	<p>“This is my understanding of where things are at...”</p> <p><i>Uncertain:</i> “It can be difficult to predict what will happen with your health. I hope that you will continue to live well for a long time, but it is possible you could become unwell quickly. It is important we prepare for that possibility.”</p> <p>OR</p> <p><i>Time:</i> “I wish this were not the case, but I am concerned that time might be as short as...(express as a range, eg, days to weeks, weeks to months, months to a year).”</p> <p>OR</p> <p><i>Function:</i> “I hope that this is not the case, but I am concerned that this may be as well as you will feel and things are likely to get worse.”</p> <p>Allow silence, explore emotion</p>
<p>EXPLORE</p>	<p>“What are your priorities if your health does get worse?”</p> <p>“What worries you when you think about your health changing?”</p> <p>“What helps you through the tough times?”</p> <p>“What abilities are so important for you, that you can’t imagine living without them?”</p> <p>“If your health does get worse, how much are you willing to go through for the possibility of more time?”</p> <p>“How much does your family/whānau know about what is most important to you?”</p>
<p>CLOSE</p>	<p>“I have heard you say ... is really important to you. Keeping that in mind, I suggest that we ... This will help us make sure your care focuses on what is important to you.”</p> <p>“How does this plan seem to you?”</p> <p>“I will do all I can to help you get the best care possible.”</p> <p>“Is there anything you would like to go over again/ask/talk about?”</p>

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Conversation flow

1. Set up the conversation

Introduce the idea and benefits

Ask permission

Check whether the person would like someone else with them (if so, negotiate how this might be supported)

2. Assess health understanding and information preferences

Ask what they already know

Ask what they would like to know

3. Share prognosis

Tailor information to the person

Allow silence, explore emotion

4. Explore key topics

Priorities

Fears and worries

What helps them through the tough times

Critical abilities

Trade-offs

Family/whānau

5. Close the conversation

Summarise what you've heard

Provide a clinical recommendation and formulate a plan with the person

Affirm your commitment to the person

Check whether there are any loose ends (unanswered questions or concerns)

6. Document your conversation