

Serious Illness Conversation Guide for Unhoused or Housing Vulnerable Older Adults

Note for Facilitator: The purpose of this guide is to elicit what’s most important to the patient to help guide future care and medical treatment if they get sick or injured.

Conversation Flow	Language
<p>Set up the Conversation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the idea and benefits • Ask permission 	<p>I would like to talk together about your health and what matters to you because I’d like you to have the information and support you need.</p> <p>Would this be OK?</p>
<p>Assess understanding and preferences</p>	<p>As your _____ [discipline + role], I have [describe relationship] with your doctor. To make sure I share information that is helpful, what do you understand about what’s going on with your [illness of focus] now?</p> <p>What are you most worried about with your [illness]?</p>
<p>Share Prognosis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share prognosis • Frame as a “wish...worry”, “hope...worry” statement • Allow silence, explore emotions 	<p>Is it okay if I share my worries about what may be ahead with your [illness] or health?</p> <p>I am worried your health might get worse; we know people can get sicker or injured, and we want to know what’s most important to you if that happens.</p> <p>Pause. Allow silence.</p> <p>Some people find this to be a hard conversation.</p>
<p>Explore key topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goals • Fears and worries • Sources of strength 	<p>If your health gets worse, what are your most important goals?</p> <p>What are your biggest worries?</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical abilities • Other contacts/ connections with people 	<p>What gives you strength as you think about the future?</p> <p>What activities bring joy and meaning in your life?</p> <p>What do you need to take care of yourself?</p> <p>Having talked about all this, what are your hopes for your health?</p> <p>Have you ever talked about your worries or about what's important to you to other people? If so, who are they?</p>
<p>Close the Conversation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarize • Make a recommendation • Check in with the patient • Affirm commitment 	<p>I hear you say that ____ is really important to you and that you are hoping for _____.</p> <p>Keeping that in mind, and what we know about your illness, would it be OK if I share what may be helpful?</p> <p>This gives me a good understanding of what's important to you. Have you spoken with a doctor about anything we've talked about today? Would you feel comfortable with me sharing this with them?</p> <p>Based on what we talked about, I'm going to [fill in action steps].</p>
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