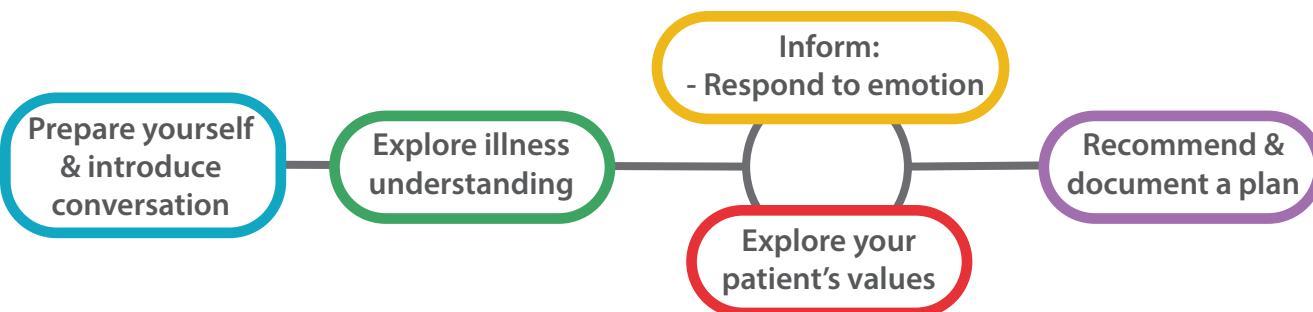


A conversation guide to align available treatment and care options with the patient's goals and values.



## Steps:

### PREPARE YOURSELF & INTRODUCE CONVERSATION:

- Know clinical status
- Know treatment options
- Leave your agenda aside so you can really listen

Inform:  
- Respond to emotion

### EXPLORE ILLNESS UNDERSTANDING:

- Listen and clarify with questions

Explore your patient's values

## Phrases:

"I'd like to make sure you get the best care possible. To do this, we need to have a serious conversation."

### INFORM:

- Fill in any information gaps
- Speak slowly
- Pause often to let information get absorbed
- Expect & respond to emotion with empathetic statements

"Despite giving your father oxygen, his lungs are getting worse...this makes me concerned that he may die from this infection."

- "This must be shocking news..."
- "I can hear how upset you are..."
- "Tell me more about..."

### EXPLORE YOUR PATIENT'S VALUES:

- Ask about:
  - Goals and values
  - Hopes, fears and worries

"I wish it were different...I am worried about him...I wonder if he ever talked about how he would want to be cared for if he were critically ill...."

- "Do you have any worries or fears for him at this time?"
- "What do you think he would say would be most important to him at this time?"

### RECOMMEND & DOCUMENT A PLAN:

- Based on your clinical assessment AND patient goals, recommend a treatment plan
- "Given what you've said and what I know about his medical situation, I'd recommend"

"You've said his goal is to live long enough to see his brother who is coming to visit from overseas"... "I think we can work together on that. I'd suggest we..."

- "I'd like to recommend that we use medications and oxygen to try and help him recover but, if he continues to get worse, that we focus on comfort instead of prolonging this time with life support measures..."
- "Your goal is to focus on comfort and being near family ... in that case, I'd recommend..."

Additional COVID-19-related communication skills (free access): <https://www.vitaltalk.org/guides/covid-19-communication-skills/>

© 2020 by Drs. Marchington, Lewin, Kaya, Steinberg, Incardona, Myers, Ailon, Chakraborty, Grossman, Perri, Wentlandt, You & Ms. Andreychuk.

**Acknowledgement:** Ariadne Labs' *Serious Illness Conversation Guide* and VitalTalk were used in developing both the structure and content.