Serious Illness Conversation Guide

PATIENT-TESTED LANGUAGE

SET UP

"I'd like to talk about what is ahead with your illness and do some thinking in advance about what is important to you so that I can make sure we provide you with the care you want — **is this okay?**"

ASSESS

"What is **your understanding** now of where you are with your illness?"

"How much **information** about what is likely to be ahead with your illness would you like from me?"

SHARE

"I want to share with you **my understanding** of where things are with your illness..."

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 but I'm **worried** that you could get sick quickly, and I think it is important to prepare for that possibility."
OR
Time: "I **wish** we were not in this situation, but I am **worried** that time may be as short as ___ *(express as a range, e.g. days to weeks, weeks to months, months to a year)*."
OR
Function: "I **hope** that this is not the case, but I'm **worried** that this may be as strong as you will feel, and things are likely to get more difficult."

EXPLORE

"What are your most important **goals** if your health situation worsens?"

"What are your biggest **fears and worries** about the future with your health?"

"What gives you **strength** as you think about the future with your illness?"

"What **abilities** are so critical to your life that you can't imagine living without them?"

"If you become sicker, **how much are you willing to go through** for the possibility of gaining more time?"

"How much does your **family** know about your priorities and wishes?"

CLOSE

"I've heard you say that ___ is really important to you. Keeping that in mind, and what we know about your illness, I **recommend** that we ___. This will help us make sure that your treatment plans reflect what's important to you."

"How does this plan seem to you?"

"I will do everything I can to help you through this."

ARIADNE LABS

Example physician narrative

I met with Mrs. Smith today to have a serious illness conversation.

***Prognostic understanding**: overestimates prognosis.*

***I communicated with Mrs. Smith that her prognosis** is several months to a year.*

***The patient's most important goals are** to be physically comfortable and be mentally aware.*

***Her biggest fears are** loss of control and finances.*

*The patients states being conscious and being able to interact with others **are functions she cannot live without**,*

***If the patient becomes sick, they are willing to use the following interventions**: aggressive tests and procedures in order to gain more time.*

She has had some discussions with family but the conversation was incomplete.

***I recommended** discussing it further with her loved ones**. We filled out a** MOLST form**. Time spent discussing the patient's values, priorities and preferences for care was** 40 minutes**.*

Serious Illness Communication Guide

Pre-visit phone script for MA/RN

- *Hello Mrs Smith, for your visit on (date), Dr. ___ would like to touch base with you about how things are going with your health. This is a very important conversation so we always encourage patients to bring their loved ones/family/surrogate to the visit.*

Discussing prognosis when time frame is unclear

- *I am worried this may be a new baseline.*
- *I am glad you feel good now but things may change quickly.*
- *I worry that time may be short.*
- *Let's talk about worst case scenarios and best case scenarios.*

Billing codes

- Includes the explanation and discussion of advance directives such as standard forms e.g. future care a patient would want to receive if they become unable to speak for themselves.
- Can bill ACP codes multiple times as long as there is a documented change in health status or directives for EOL care

99497 30 min F2F with pt/family/surrogate
99498 > 30 minutes