

Serious Illness Conversation Guide role-play cases

Small group case one intro: Advanced chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)

Mr/Mrs Joe/Josephine Smith is a 68-year-old retired salesperson with COPD and is on steroids and oxygen. She also has diabetes, chronic kidney disease and chronic hip pain. S/he has had three hospitalisations this year, each for complications of COPD, as well as two emergency department visits, once for a fall, and once for a repeat prescription of diabetes medication over the weekend.

S/he was recently hospitalised again for an exacerbation of COPD, with worsening shortness of breath, increasing muscle weakness, fatigue, worsening joint pain and stiffness, and a 5kg weight loss. S/he has only recently returned home following a post-acute rehabilitation stay.

Even before this admission, Mr/Mrs Smith's functional status was declining. S/he has required increasing assistance from his/her spouse with household tasks and personal care, and has required short rehabilitation stays after each of the last three hospitalisations. S/he has missed the last three appointments with his/her GP due to cycling in and out of the hospital.

Setting: Post-hospital follow-up visit with GP.

Task: The goal of the discussion today is to explore Mr/Mrs Smith's values, goals and care preferences as his/her illness progresses, using the Serious Illness Conversation Guide. The focus should be on values and goals for the months ahead rather than procedures and therapies.

As you prepare to meet with Mr/Mrs Smith, you consider the following: Based on his/her multiple comorbidities, declining functional status and repeat hospitalisations, you estimate his/her prognosis is most likely less than two years.

Small group case two intro: Pancreatic cancer

Mr/Mrs Steve/Sue Jones is a 55-year-old teacher with stage IV pancreatic cancer. S/he has received three months of chemotherapy so far, which s/he is continuing. His/her most recent CT scan showed some response of metastases to the chemo.

Mr/Mrs Jones returned to work four weeks ago, though not with a full class load. His/her spouse is very involved, as is their one adult son. This is a patient that you know very well, and today s/he is here alone.

Setting: Outpatient oncology or primary care visit; you know the patient very well.

Task: The goal of the discussion today is to explore Mr/Mrs Jones' values, goals and care preferences as his/her illness progresses, using the Serious Illness Conversation Guide. The focus should be on values and goals for the months ahead rather than procedures and treatments.

As you prepare to meet with Mr/Mrs Jones, you consider the following: This patient has stage IV pancreatic cancer. Prognosis at this stage is likely months to a year.