

Serious Illness Conversation Guide drill sheet

	Clinician	Patient
Set-up	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?	I'm doing fine right now. I think things are in a pretty good place. I don't know that we need to have a big conversation.
	I do this with all of my patients because it helps me understand what is most important to you. And, I'm going to use this conversation guide to make sure we don't miss anything. Is that okay?	I guess that would be okay.
	This is an important conversation. Would you like someone to be here with you?	I'm okay doing it by myself.
Assess	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?	Well, I'm feeling better since being in the hospital. But I know there is a lot wrong with me – with my heart, lungs, and kidneys. And, I know that we don't have a lot of ways to make those better – but I'm a positive person, and I know I can get through this.
	I've been really impressed by your strength and positivity.	Thank you.
	In terms of your health, how much information about what might happen in the future would you like from me?	I want to know everything you know.
Share	This is my understanding of where things are at...	Okay.
	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.	Oh, goodness. I wasn't expecting that.
	This must be really hard to hear ...	It is. My family needs me.
	I know how important they are to you.	They are. They're everything to me.

	Clinician	Patient
Explore	What are your priorities if your health does get worse?	I want to spend as much time with my family as possible. I want to be there for them – and make sure they are taken care of. My daughter is getting married next year. I'd like to be there for that.
	What worries you when you think about your health changing?	I don't want my family to have to see me suffer. And, I don't want to spend my last months suffering – or suffocating – or in the hospital away from them. What can you do to make sure I don't suffocate?
	Managing your symptoms is really important for us to talk about. Can we set that aside for right now and come back to it later?	Okay.
	What helps you through the tough times?	My family is everything to me. My spouse is a great support, and my daughter makes me laugh and keeps my spirits up.
	What abilities are so important for you, that you can't imagine living without them?	I want to be here for my family and feel well enough to be able to be with them. I want to be able to go out to dinner with my family, sit outside...
	If your health does get worse, how much are you willing to go through for the possibility of more time?	Well, I'd be willing to have more tests and treatments if they help me feel better, but I'm worried about dying in the hospital hooked up to a machine.
	How much do your family/whānau know about what is most important to you?	I think my spouse knows, but we haven't really talked about it. We probably should do that.
Close	I have heard you say that time, being able to interact with your family and be home are really important to you. You've also identified the importance of talking about these issues with your spouse. Keeping that in mind, I suggest that we make a meeting to talk together with your spouse to think through next steps. This will help us make sure your care focuses on what is important to you.	Okay.
	How does this plan seem to you?	I know it is going to be tough, but meeting together would be an important next step.
	I will do all I can to help you get the best care possible. Is there anything you would like to go over again/ask/talk about?	This is a lot to take in. I think that is enough for today.