

Serious Illness Conversation Guide role-play cases

Acute hospital admission

Congested heart failure, hypertension, and chronic renal failure - Mr./Mrs. King

Character's clinical problem

Mrs./Mr. Janey/Jamie King is a 76 year-old with a history of congested heart failure (CHF), hypertension, and chronic renal failure. Over the last few years s/he has had several admissions with exacerbations of CHF requiring IV frusemide. A recent ECHO confirmed a worsening ejection fraction. This is consistent with the symptoms of increasing fatigue, shortness of breath and reducing appetite Janey/Jamie has reported to the community heart failure nurse specialists.

Janey/Jamie has been resident at the local caravan park for the last five years. S/he tends to keep to her/himself, pottering in the small veggie patch at the back of the caravan and listening to her/his radio. S/he does not have any close whānau but the owner of the caravan park and several of the other long term residence keep any eye out for each other.

Hospital admission day 1: Mrs./Mr. King has a six day history of increasing cough, shortness of breath and leg swelling. S/he was admitted overnight with chest pain and new onset atrial fibrillation. IV Frusemide and digoxin has commenced and symptoms are improving.

TASK: You have been asked to meet with Janey/Jamie today to explore her/his values, goals and care preferences, using the serious illness conversation guide. Your focus should be on values and goals for this admission and the months ahead, rather than procedures and therapies.

As you prepare to meet Mrs/Mr. King, you consider the following: While you anticipate improvement during this admission, based on her/his multiple comorbidities and declining cardiac status and repeat hospitalisations, you estimate her/his prognosis is most likely less than two years.

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Hospital admission day 6: Mrs./Mr. King has not improved as anticipated. S/he has developed acute on chronic renal failure and the possibility of requiring dialysis has been discussed with the patient. BNP remains elevated, shortness of breath on minimal exertion continues and s/he has increasing O2 requirements.
Recovery is now uncertain.

TASK: You have been asked to meet with Janey/Jamie again today, to explore her/his values, goals and care preferences, using the serious illness conversation guide given her/his condition has not improved as anticipated and more aggressive and invasive treatment options are being

discussed. Your focus remains on her/his values and goals and how these may be changing given the current situation, rather than procedures and therapies.

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