



# Conversation Guide

An approach to discussing what matters most with a seriously ill person

T

## Thank You (and check-in)

"Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am a doctor/nurse/social worker/chaplain/etc. on your team. Thank you for taking time to talk to me today. How are you doing?"

A

## Aim

"I'd like to spend time today learning about you and your condition and hearing about any concerns or questions you may have for me (or that I can share with your doctor/team). This will guide us in knowing how to best care for you. Is this ok?"

L

## Listen (to what they know)

"I've read your medical chart and spoken to other members of your team about how things are going, however it's helpful to hear directly from you. What is your understanding of where things are at right now with your condition?" (or "What have your doctors told you is going on with your condition right now?")

K

## Knowledge (ask permission to share it)

"Thank you for sharing what you know." **If not relaying information, skip to the MAP section below. If relaying information, ask for permission first.** "Would it be okay if I share what I know?"

R

## Relay Information

"I have the same understanding as you do." OR "I have serious news to share." OR "The team is worried you're in a different place now." **Then share what you know.**

E

## Express Empathy

**Hearing serious news often leads to emotion so expect it and respond with empathy.** (E.g., "I wish I had different news." OR "I had hoped for a different outcome." OR "I can't imagine how upsetting this is to hear.")

M

## Map (out what matters to them)

"Given what you know about your condition, what is most important to you?" AND

"What would you be hoping for if/as your condition worsens?" AND

"What worries or concerns might you have for me (or for your doctor/team) as you think about (the possibility of) getting sicker?"

A

## Align

"What I'm hearing is most important to you is \_\_\_\_\_ and that you're concerned about \_\_\_\_\_. Did I get that right?"

P

## Plan (and pass along)

"Based on what matters most to you, and based on my understanding of what's to come as your illness changes over time, would it be okay if I make a recommendation? I recommend the following..."

**Say what you will do before what you will not do.** (If applicable: "I would also like to share this information with the team member who is best able to help address [x] and ask them to follow-up with you.")

"How does this plan sound to you? Thank you for taking the time to have this conversation today."

## Update the patient's chart