

Starting the Conversation

About End-of-Life Care with Your Patients.

Whether your patient is ready for hospice care, or they simply need help in establishing their goals of care toward end of life, Providence Home Services would like to help you in starting that difficult conversation with your patients.

Below are some useful phrases for talking with your patients:



Getting Started:

- “Can you tell me what your understanding is about your illness?”
- “Tell me how things are going for you.”
- “As you think about what lies ahead, what concerns you the most?”

Continuing Phrases:

- “Sounds like you’re really worried about”
- “Tell me more about that.”
- What do you mean by _____ (“doing everything, giving up, hopelessness, becoming a vegetable?”)

Surrogate:

- “If you were to get so sick that you couldn’t talk to me directly, who should I talk to to help me make decisions about your care?”

Other Useful Statements:

- “I wish there was something to make your cancer go away. Unfortunately there isn’t. But there are things we can do to help you feel better.”
- I wish I could tell you exactly how long you have, but unfortunately, I can’t. Tell me more about what you were hoping I could tell you.”
- “When you think about the future, what do you **hope** for?”
- “We will never give up on you; we are just shifting out care from curing to healing.”
- “We will do everything we can to make you (more) comfortable.”

Talking about Death and Dying:

- “Do you sometimes think about dying or what that would be like for you?”

Informed Refusal:

- I have information about your condition. Some patients want to know the details; other patients want me to talk to someone else. How do you feel?”

Spirituality:

- “Do you have any spiritual beliefs or practices that are important to you? As your health-care provider, I would like to be supportive of these.”