

ADVANCE CARE PLANNING CONVERSATIONS

As caregivers, it is our responsibility to communicate accurately AND empathically, especially in times of crisis. Communicating with empathy increases the likelihood that patients and their loved ones will engage in conversations about their care. The following strategies help to establish a relationship quickly based on empathy and mutual respect, to more fully engage patients and families in difficult discussions and decision-making.

Convey Value & Respect	<p>Introduce yourself with your name and role.</p> <p>Express empathy:</p> <p>"This is a very stressful time. I'm sorry we have to meet under these circumstances."</p>
Collaboratively Set the Agenda	<p>"I'd like to talk about what may be ahead for you with this illness and find out more about your perspective so we can take the best care of you. What else would you like to make sure we cover?"</p>
Elicit the Patient's Perspective	<p>"What is your understanding of how COVID-19 is affecting people with your medical condition?"</p> <p>"What are your concerns about what might lie ahead?"</p> <p>"What has helped you to get through tough times in the past?"</p> <p>"If things get worse, what would be most important to you?"</p>
Share Information Offer information in small increments. Recognize emotion and demonstrate empathy in the moment.	<p>Signal shift from information gathering to information sharing and provide a warning message:</p> <p>"I'd like to offer some information. Some of this may be difficult to hear."</p> <p>"COVID-19 is a viral illness that spreads like the flu. We know it is particularly serious in patients with your medical condition/status."</p> <p>"I'm worried that you could get much sicker very quickly."</p> <p>"This is a hard thing to talk about, but if that happens, you are at risk of dying in a short period of time."</p>
Collaboratively Develop the Plan Make a recommendation Check for understanding and agreement. Affirm ongoing support.	<p>"I've heard you say that ____ is important to you right now. Keeping this in mind, and what we know about this illness, I recommend ____."</p> <p>"How does that plan sound to you?"</p> <p>"We will do everything we can to help you through this."</p> <p>This might sound like:</p> <p>"I've heard you say that not suffering if you become more short of breath is important to you. Keeping in mind what we know about this illness, and what you've shared with me, I recommend that we treat you with oxygen and medicine to help with your shortness of breath. If things worsen, we will not send you to the intensive care unit as that will only prolong your suffering. But we will continue to aggressively treat your symptoms so you remain comfortable. How does this sound?"</p>

Document details of above conversation as an **Advance Care Planning (ACP) note**. These notes and any previously documented discussions can be found under the ACP tab in Epic.