A Guide To Having Difficult Conversations With Patients/Relatives

NHS Frimley Collaborative
Partnership of Clinical Commissioning Groups

Front|line Communication

This resource was made for those having to have DNACPR conversation during covid-19
However, the frame work and skills can be used when having any difficult conversation.

Setup the conversation

Introduce the purpose of the conversation
Get permission
Acknowledge it may be difficult but important

> Start with the purpose of being curious
>
> *"I'm interested to know how you feel things are going......."*

Find out their understanding

Allow silence, explore emotion
Acknowledge shared understanding
Discuss prognosis if permitted

> DNACPR is part of a bigger conversation
>
> "what would be most important to you when you're dying?"

Explore what's important to them?

Goals	Place of care
Fears and worries	Wishes
Sources of strength	Family

Tailor information to their preference

Chunk into small amounts and regularly
Check understanding & feelings
Make recommendations for care
Allow silence, explore emotion

> Showing empathy builds trust and report
>
> "I can hear that's difficult for you"

Close the conversation

Summarise what you've heard
Affirm your commitment to them
Offer a follow up call to be arranged, if time to think is needed

> Recommend care based on what is important to them
>
> "Given what's most important to you the best plan for your care is ---. What are your thoughts on that?"

Document the conversation

Online Video Training

- Here are two role-play scenarios to give you some ideas about things you might say and how to use a conversation flow.
- No two conversation will ever be the same, having a clear purpose and structure for the conversation will support you.
- Dr. Anant Sachdev GP role-played these two scenarios. Both conversations were approx. 15 min long, but we have condensed them to a shorter version.
- Both the patient and relative were played by actors but the scenarios are based on a real patient and family and the conversation they have had.

Difficult Conversations

Video 1 – Talking to Patient - DNACPR

Video 2 – Talking to Relative

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