



Communication and Decision-Making Toolkit

CHECKLIST

- ☐ Remember to introduce yourself to each new patient and their family. Check out the 'Hello, my name is' campaign and share it with your colleagues to promote awareness of the importance of patient-centred care. www.hellomynameis.org.uk
- ☐ Think of one question from a patient approaching the end of life, or from their family member, that you found difficult to respond to. How would you answer that question now based on what you have learnt from this module? Ask a colleague what they would have said in that situation. Talk about their suggested response.
- ☐ Reflect on the conditions needed to ensure that your patient has the best opportunity for engaging with you and other members of the team. Think about how to improve communication. If a patient is non-verbal or has limited capacity for speech, check if they have any communication aids. Ask if they are more comfortable if a family member or carer is there.
- ☐ Ask open-ended questions like, 'How is your treatment affecting you and your family?' Use "other people" framing so that patients or family members know it is okay to be scared, concerned, or confused. For example, 'Other people with conditions like yours sometimes worry about things that may or may not happen in the future, so I just wanted to check in with you. What concerns you most?'
- ☐ When talking to a patient by the bedside, sit down so that your face is as much on the same level as the patient as possible. Be aware of the cultural appropriateness of eye contact and proximity. Practice active listening, and feedback to check your understanding.

HELPFUL LINKS

- CareSearch. [Planning care](#)
- Indigenous Program of Experience in Palliative Approach (IPEPA): [Cultural Considerations, providing end-of-life care for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples.](#)
- CarerHelp. [Tips on having death and dying discussions with culturally diverse families.](#)

VIDEOS, BLOGS, PODCASTS

- End-of-Life Essentials: [Communication Masterclass Webinar](#)
- End-of-Life Essentials Blog: Anna Nicholas, Palliative Care Clinical Nurse Consultant (Royal Hobart Hospital): [Top 5 Insights for end-of-life care in hospitals](#)
- Professor Imogen Mitchell, Executive Director, Research and Academic Partnerships, Canberra Health Services: [Key learnings in providing end-of-life care to patients.](#)

FURTHER READING

- Bennett F, O'Conner-Von S. Communication Interventions to Improve Goal-Concordant Care of Seriously Ill Patients: An Integrative Review. J Hosp Palliat Nurs. 2020;22(1):40-48. [doi:10.1097/NJH.0000000000000606](https://doi.org/10.1097/NJH.0000000000000606)
- Clayton JM, Hancock KM, Butow PN, Tattersall MHN, Currow DC. Clinical practice guidelines for communicating prognosis and end-of-life issues with adults in the advanced stages of a life-limiting illness, and their caregivers. Med J Aust. 2007;186(S12):S77-105. [doi:10.5694/j.1326-5377.2007.tb01100.x](https://doi.org/10.5694/j.1326-5377.2007.tb01100.x)
- Spencer E, Waran E. Opening the lines of communication: towards shared decision making and improved end-of-life care in the Top End. Med J Aust. 2020;213(1):10-11.e1. [doi:10.5694/mja2.50656](https://doi.org/10.5694/mja2.50656)