



Difficult Conversations

Difficult conversations
at end of life

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Difficult Conversations

We provide training for health and social care professionals to help them become masters of conversations that most of us find very difficult.



The need

- Ageing population
- Increase in multiple morbidities
- Significant inequalities across practice, costs, care planning and experience (CQC 2016)
- Poor care planning equals a poor experience (Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman 2015: London)



Statistics

- 65 % spend on ‘High Risk’ population - 5 %
- 25 % spend in last year of life - 1 % of total
- 70 % would prefer to die at home
- Yet 58 % die in hospital, 40 – 50 % avoidable (NAO)
- One third of acute complaints are of poor communication (Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman 2015:London)



Evidence

- Clinicians struggle to engage service users and family into conversations about end of life (BMJ 2009)
- Clinicians report difficulty approaching topic of preferred place of death unless the patient / family bring it up first (BMJ 2009)
- Not engaging in serious conversations leads to low satisfaction and loss of confidence in the care professionals (Johnson,



Evidence

- Good communication is critical
- Most complaints due to poor communication
- Mismatch between professional and individual expectation of responsibilities



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Group work



- What are ways to get the conversation going?
 - What kinds of questions should be asked?



Framework

S – Setting

C – Communicate with kindness

A – Ask

R – Reflect / Respond with empathy

S – Summary



Unhelpful

“ You will be okay. ”

“ Don't talk about such things. ”

“ Don't be silly. ”

“ Of course you are not going to die. ”

“ I understand what you are going through. ”

“ Shouldn't you talk to someone else about
this? ”



Helpful

“ What do you think ? ”

“ What has the doctor told you ? ”

“ Is it okay if we talk about this ? ”

“It is important for us to know your wishes. ”

“ I can only imagine how this must feel. ”

“ Are you okay for me to share what we discussed today with the team? ”



Top Tips

1. Preparation
2. Check your internal barometer / know your limits
3. Try and pinpoint exactly your challenge
4. Consider using a communication framework



Top Tips

5. ASK

6. Be honest

7. Awareness :

- Know the legal issues
- Safety = documentation & communication with care team



Top Tips

8. Timing :

- Have conversations at the person's pace

9. Develop a supportive networks

- Help builds resilience

10. TOP TIP ...



**KEEP
CALM
AND
JUST
DO IT**

“” For further information contact :

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