



Having Difficult Conversations with Older Adults

Last reviewed February 2020

Difficult Conversations: From Diagnosis to Death

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4295750/pdf/i1524-5012-14-4-712.pdf>

This paper reviews the literature about the importance of communication in delivering bad news, the status of communication training, communication strategies and psychosocial interventions. **(OPEN ACCESS)**

Talking with Older Patients About Sensitive Subjects

<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/talking-older-patients-about-sensitive-subjects>

This American website provides general guidance regarding approaching a variety of potentially sensitive subjects with older adults. **(OPEN ACCESS)**

Talking with Your Older Patient

<http://memoryworks.org/PUBS/NIA/Talking%20With%20Your%20Older%20Patient-A%20Clinician's%20Handbook.pdf>

This American handbook was developed to help teach effective communication techniques to support building relationships with older adults. **(OPEN ACCESS)**

Serious Illness Conversation Guide

<http://www.instituteforhumancaring.org/documents/Providers/PSJH-Serious-Illness-Conversation-Guide.pdf>

This handout developed for health care professionals outlines effective conversation flow and samples of patient-tested language. **(OPEN ACCESS)**

VITALtalk <https://www.vitaltalk.org/>

This American website provides a number of video examples for health care providers on how they can manage a variety of difficult conversations with patients and families. **(OPEN ACCESS)**

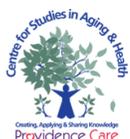
How do Physicians Talk and What do They Say in the Difficult Conversations with Patients and their Loved Ones in Palliative Care? A Qualitative Study to Investigate Strategies to Help Improve Difficult Conversations

<https://www.omicsonline.org/open-access/how-do-physicians-talk-and-what-do-they-say-in-the-difficult-conversations-with-patients-and-their-loved-ones-in-palliative-care-a-2165-7386-1000285.pdf>

The study described in this article outlines important strategic areas in conversations to be considered in having difficult conversations. **(OPEN ACCESS)**

Which Critical Communication Skills are Essential for Interdisciplinary End-of-Life Discussions? <https://journalofethics.ama-assn.org/sites/journalofethics.ama-assn.org/files/2018-08/medu2-1808.pdf>

In this article, the authors reviewed what was known about the skills and strategies necessary for meaningful and effective end of life conversations and the role of interdisciplinary approaches to these conversations. **(OPEN ACCESS)**



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Conversations in End-of-Life Care: Communication Tools for Critical Care

http://www.satin.ulaval.ca/sites/satin.ulaval.ca/files/shannon_2011.pdf

This article discusses the results of an interactive workshop conducted with experienced critical care nurses using different communication tools. **(OPEN ACCESS)**

Facilitating Effective End-of-Life Communication - Helping People Decide

<http://canadiangeriatrics.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Facilitating-Effective-End-of-Life-Communication-%E2%80%93-Helping-People-Decide.pdf>

This article provides an overview of differing definitions and legislation used related to advance care planning and goals of care across Canada. The authors aim to provide ideas on facilitating discussions and highlight opportunities to start these conversations with patients and substitute decision makers. **(OPEN ACCESS)**

Communication About Serious Illness Care Goals: A Review and Synthesis of Best Practices

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/article-abstract/1916912>

The authors conducted a narrative review of evidence regarding advance care planning and end-of-life communication. **(OPEN ACCESS)**

Communication and Decision Making About Life-Sustaining Treatment: Examining the Experiences of Resident Physicians and Seriously-Ill Hospitalized Patients

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2585663/?report=reader>

The authors explored how discussions about life-sustaining treatment occur and examined the factors which influence physician's communication strategies with the aim of providing novel insights into how communication can be improved. **(OPEN ACCESS)**

Communication Tools for End-of-Life Decision-Making in the Intensive Care Unit: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis

<https://ccforum.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13054-016-1264-y>

The authors conducted a systematic review to determine the effect of structured communication tools for end-of-life decision making in contrast to usual care. **(OPEN ACCESS)**

Staying Out of the Closet: LGBT Older Adults' Hopes and Fears in Considering End-of-Life

[http://www.virtualhospice.ca/Assets/staying_out_of_the_closet_lgbt_older_adults_hopes_and_fears_in_considering_end_of_life%20\(002\)_20180711161124.pdf](http://www.virtualhospice.ca/Assets/staying_out_of_the_closet_lgbt_older_adults_hopes_and_fears_in_considering_end_of_life%20(002)_20180711161124.pdf)

This study underscores the need to consider gender identity and sexual orientation at end-of-life. In particular, recognition of intersectionality and social locations is crucial to facilitating positive aging experiences and end-of-life care. **(OPEN ACCESS)**

Social Work Practice with LGBT Elders at End of Life: Developing Practice Evaluation and Clinical Skills Through a Cultural Perspective

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15524256.2015.1074141>

This article focuses on culturally sensitive clinical issues related to best practices with LGBT elder patients at the end-of-life at key points in the therapeutic relationship. **(PAID ACCESS)**