

Talking about uncertain recovery



How to begin honest conversations about treatment in the urgent care setting

Communication tips

Simple language

Be curious and find out what matters to the person

Allow space for emotion

Introduction

Hello. My name is Grace, I'm one of the doctors looking after you. What would you like me to call you?

Frame the conversation

I'd like to talk about how you're doing and what to expect from treatment.

Ask permission

Is that OK?
Would you like to see someone with you?

Check understanding

Can you tell me what you know about your condition?

Helpful concepts

> Reframe understanding

I see you've had several admissions in recent months, your heart is getting weaker and you've been needing more help from your family too.

> Share uncertainty

I hope you respond to this treatment but I'm worried because you're very unwell. Some medical problems can't be reversed and there's a chance your body won't recover from this illness.

> Clarify goals of treatment

I want to reassure you that we'll keep giving you any treatments that help and make you feel better. However, we don't want to give you treatments that won't help or could make things worse.

Pause and listen

It can be hard to talk about this....

Do you have any questions?

Close and next steps

I'm going to record our conversation in the notes to share it with the wider team

