



TOPIC 3

CONVERSING WITH THE PATIENT OR THE PERSON IN END-OF-LIFE CARE

Talking about approaching death is a challenging subject and there is no one-size-fits-all approach that can be taken. This topic presents you with tips that may help you talk with a person approaching their end of life. Keep in mind these are suggestions and not prescriptive; you should trust your intuition and adjust the conversation regarding the relationship you have with the person who will pass away.

Moreover, before embarking on the journey of supporting an individual approaching their end-of-life, you may consider reconciling as much as possible with the idea of death and dying (see topic 1: Self-contemplation/introspection)

Module 1:

Let's talk about death and dying

TRY THIS

You may consider helping a person approaching end of life to identify their feelings, their emotions, and their needs.

(You can use support documents with list of feelings, emotions and needs available on the resources section.)

Here are some tips before you start the conversation with the person at the end of life:

- Is it a calm time when there is no risk of being disturbed for care or by visitors? You may ask the person: are you feeling calm and ready to share a moment with me? Are you willing to express your thoughts, emotions, feelings, and needs?
- You may start by identifying feelings: do you feel pain somewhere? Or, conversely, do you feel light/liberated/calm?

You may also observe non-verbal cues (breathing, gaze, body posture, facial reactions).

- This attention to what the person says or what their body expresses can give you clues about their bodily feelings through sentences and/or symbolic imagery.
- Do you feel pain somewhere? Or, conversely, do you feel light/liberated/calm?

You may also observe non-verbal cues (breathing, gaze, body posture, facial reactions, ...). This attention to what the person says or what their body expresses can give you clues about their bodily feelings through sentences and/or symbolic imagery.

In a second step, you may invite the person to identify the predominant emotion for them, which is related to the initially sensed feeling. A variety of emotions exist, and it is not always easy to know which is the main emotion. You can first propose the basic six emotions: joy, anger, surprise, sadness, fear, and disgust.

If the person is willing to delve deeper into the introspection of their emotions, feel free to use an emotions list (cfr resources).





...at the end of life



Canva Pro

REFLECTIONS

Finally, you can invite the person to verbalise things and express their needs. Starting from the physical sensations and emotions identified, what would be your/their need(s) now?

Basic needs are often categorized into different groups:

- Physical well-being.
- Meaning/fulfilment.
- Peace/respect.
- Autonomy/self-esteem.
- Self-expression.
- Security.
- Relationship/belonging (to a group).

You can help yourself with a list of needs (cfr resources).

After these three steps, you can conclude the sharing. A moment of reflection can be valuable:

- How does your loved one at the end of life feel after the discussion?
- What can you do to assist them?
- How do you feel?

TRAINER TIPS

This exercise can be suggested as a practical activity in pairs during a training session. This pair exercise should last min. 45 minutes. You can refer to the resource materials for emotion and needs lists that enable more precise identification.

You can propose to do this exercise in a creative way and propose some materials to allow painting or drawing. Art can be a good way to express feelings, emotions, and needs. If you do use this approach, ask participants to explain their art at the end of the exercise.

This exercise can be followed by a group debriefing session.



Co-funded by
the European Union