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COVID-19

Covid-19 communication aids

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Illness related to the novel coronavirus has driven a global crisis, and many clinicians are facing unexpected and challenging conversations. This guide is a graphic medicine adaptation of text that was created to provide a practical introduction on how to talk about difficult topics related to covid-19. During early spread of the pandemic, the written text and subsequent illustrations were created to promote rapid sharing of communication skills with clinicians

across diverse disciplines. The primary text was produced by non-profit organisation VitalTalk, which gives training to support conversations around serious illness.

This guide is not meant to be comprehensive, but it is a starting place for improving conversations with those facing this illness.

The original text is at www.vitaltalk.org/guides/covid-19-communication-skills/.

NATHAN A. GRAY, MD

WHAT PEOPLE MAY ASK...

TRIAGE

"Why shouldn't I just go to the hospital?"

@NATHANAGRAY

WHAT YOU CAN SAY...

"Our primary concern is your safety. We are trying to organize how people come in. Please fill out the questions online, and you can speed up the process for yourself and everyone else."

"Why are you trying to keep me out of the hospital?"

"I imagine you are worried and want the best possible care. Hospital care is important when you need it, but until then we will do our best to meet your medical needs in the community. The safest thing you can do is _____."

NATHAN A. GRAY, MD WITH TEXT ADAPTED FROM VITALTALK

C.A.L.M.E.R. – COVID AS STARTING PLACE FOR ADVANCE PLANNING		
C	Check in	“How are you doing with all of this? Where do you find comfort/support?”
A	Ask about COVID	“What have you been thinking about COVID and your situation?”
L	Lay out issues	“Is there anything you would want us to know if you got COVID/ if your COVID gets bad?”
M	Motivate to choose a proxy and talk	“Who would speak for you if things got bad?” “What matters most to you?” “Based on what you’ve said, I recommend ____. What do you think?”
E	Expect emotion	“This can be really hard to talk about...” Allow silence. @NATHANAGRAY
R	Record the discussion	Any documentation can be very helpful to colleagues and your patient. “I’ll record what you’ve said for both of us. It’s very meaningful. Thank you.”

WHAT PEOPLE MAY ASK/SAY...	WHAT YOU CAN SAY...
<p>COUNSELING</p> <p>"I am scared."</p> <p>@NATHANAGRAY</p>	<p>"This is such a tough situation. I think anyone would be scared right now. Can you share more with me?"</p>
<p>"You guys are so incompetent!"</p>	<p>"I can see why you're frustrated. I am willing to do what is in my power to help."</p>
<p>"Do I need to be saying my goodbyes?"</p>	<p>"I am hoping that's not the case. And I'm also worried time could be short. What's most pressing right now?"</p>

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Competing interests: VitalTalk's covid-19 communication guide was produced in March 2020 and distributed freely online. The initial graphic versions of this work were also adapted in March and distributed freely via social media to disseminate communication strategies to clinicians in a timely

manner. VitalTalk is a non-profit organisation. Neither Nathan Gray nor VitalTalk profited financially from creation of this guide.

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