

Why is it important?

Speaking openly about the future and what matters to an individual can have a huge impact on that person's quality of life, allowing them to do things that are important to them, and gives those left behind peace of mind and comfort.

Choose the right place, the right time. No one finds it easy to talk when they are rushed or in a stressful situation

Tips and Questions that help open up discussion....

What do you understand about your illness and what is happening to you at the moment?

Have you thought about who you would like to support you if you were unable to make decisions about your healthcare needs alone?

I know talking about these things is never easy, but people experience substantial relief by talking things over and making some plans.

What matters to you?

What are your priorities if time is shorter than you would like?

What are your fears or worries for the future?

Starting a conversation about the end of life: Some tips

Tips for opening conversations....

When people are diagnosed with a long term health condition we like to talk with them about planning for the future in terms of their healthcare?

Would it be ok to talk to you about the recent changes on your health?

What is important for you to speak about in relation to that today?

Sources: National council for Palliative Care. Difficult conversations www.ncpc.org.uk or Life is for Living available through www.dyingmatters.org Reith Lectures 2014 Atul Gawande

Tips for following up....

Try to listen well and follow the persons' lead

If the person doesn't want to talk to you, ask if they might consider discussing the matter with a friend or family member.

Be clear the door is open and they can come back with questions to you or anyone else in the team.

I've asked a lot of questions. What questions do you have?

You may not want to talk now but we would talk about it later?