COVID Conversations:
Difficult Conversations in the Time of COVID-19
Objectives

• Be able to talk to patients about advance care planning in the era of COVID
• Be able to talk to a patient with COVID about their goals of care
• Be able to attend to the emotions associated with COVID
Today's Presenter

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Co-founder, VitalTalk
COVID-Ready Communication Skills

Robert Arnold MD
University of Pittsburgh
1. A 10,000 foot view
2. What communication offers
3. What’s next
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3. What’s next
Jan. 21

The first coronavirus case in the United States was confirmed in Washington state. The patient recently returned from Wuhan, China, where a pneumonia outbreak caused by the coronavirus started in December 2019. The person who returned to the United States did so Jan. 15. “While originally thought to be spreading from animal-to-person, there are growing indications that limited person-to-person spread is happening,” a news release from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said. “It’s unclear how easily this virus is spreading between people.”
60,415 deaths in the US
(95% UI 31,000 to 126,000) projected by August 4

updated April 10 at covid19.healthdata.org
What are the communication issues

• Advance care planning

• Giving serious news to patients/families

• Goals of care in critically ill patients

• Bereavement
Unique COVID issues

• Trauma and fear
• Uncertainty
• Virtual communication
• Loneliness
• Identity issues
1. A 10,000 foot view
2. What communication offers
3. What’s next?
Communication Skills in the Age of COVID-19

Anthony Back, MD; James A. Tulsky, MD; Robert M. Arnold, MD

Article, Author, and Disclosure Information

In a new, cruel way, the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has revealed limitations in medical capacity that amplify the challenges that clinicians already face in communicating with patients about serious illness. The most recent estimates of the effects of the pandemic describe a scenario that none of us have ever seen: Demand for hospital beds in the United States will exceed capacity by 64,175 acute care beds and 17,309 intensive care beds; over the next 4 months, clinicians are projected to witness 81,114 deaths (1). These statistics, though, are merely a 30,000-foot view of the territory that clinicians are seeing now, as they grapple with patients and families on the ground about how to prepare, what is happening, and what to expect.
1. Understandable headlines
2. Emotions are key
3. Start at 10,000 feet
4. Raising the issue
COVID-ready communication skills: A playbook of VitalTalk Tips

Updated 29 March 2020.

New videos, downloadable versions, translations, specialty-specific, and other resources
Cut/Paste link: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1owCe8oSev67xFDFVkhVXE9_4TBhjB649PiMm61znpor4/edit?usp=sharing

This playbook is a super-concentrated blast of tips that will enable you to navigate through your day with honesty, empathy, and compassion—in a way that is sustainable.

You can pitch in. Contribute. Send feedback. Read the original intro (March 19).

What’s inside?

**Screening**
- When someone is worried they might be infected

**Preferencing**
- When someone may want to opt out of hospitalization

**Triaging**
- When you’re deciding where a patient should go

**Admitting**
- When your patient needs the hospital, or the ICU

**Counseling**
- When coping needs a boost, or emotions are running high

**Deciding**
- When things aren’t going well, goals of care, code status

**Resourcing**
- When limitations force you to choose, and even ration

**Notifying**
- When you are telling someone over the phone
COVID Ready Communication Playbook

This playbook is a super-concentrated blast of tips that will enable you to navigate through your day with honesty, empathy, and compassion—in a way that is sustainable.

We’re thrilled that so many of you have contributed additions, translations, and resources. Contribute more. Send feedback. Read the original introduction here.

What’s Inside?

Screening  When Someone Is Worried They Might Be Infected .......................... 4
FOR PROACTIVE PLANNING IN CONTINGENCY: “CALMER”

The Covid-As-A-Starter Preferences Or Goals Talk For Patients in A Health Care Setting.

C — Check In
  • “How are you doing with all this?” (Take their emotional temperature.)

A — Ask About COVID
  • “What have you been thinking about COVID and your situation?”
  • (Just listen)

L — Lay Out Issues
  • “Here is something I want us to be prepared for.” / “You mentioned COVID. I agree.”
  • “Is there anything you want us to know if you got COVID / if your COVID gets really bad?”

M — Motivate Them To Choose A Proxy And Talk About What Matters
  • “If things took a turn for the worse, what you say now can help your family / loved ones”
  • “Who is your backup person — who helps us make decisions if you can’t speak? Who else? (having 2 backup people is best)
  • “We’re in an extraordinary situation. Given that, what matters to you? (About any part of your life? About your health care?)
  • Make a recommendation — if they would be able to hear it. “Based on what I’ve heard, I’d recommend [this]. What do you think?”

E — Expect Emotion
  • Watch for this — acknowledge at any point
  • “This can be hard to think about.”

R — Record The Discussion
  • Any documentation — even brief — will help your colleagues and your patient
  • “I’ll write what you said in the chart. It’s really helpful, thank you.”
VitalTalk Tips

Updated with the COVID-Ready Playbook

Automatically updated iOS and Android
We’ve got your back.

In this supplement we have collected: our new videos and your amazing contributions: translations, additional scripts, resources. Looking for the original intro? In progress March 29.

You can pitch in: Contribute. Send feedback.

VitalTalk COVID-specific video

Talking to an outpatient about proactive planning
https://vimeo.com/401465080

A goals of care talk with a family surrogate
https://vimeo.com/401465080

Withdrawing a ventilator [CRISIS/SURGE]
https://vimeo.com/401215857

A family phone goodbye
https://vimeo.com/401476560
CAPC COVID-19 Response Resources

All toolkit resources and online courses have been made publicly available.

View CAPC's COVID-19 FAQ here.

CAPC wants to know how your team is responding to COVID-19. Fill in the form to share policies, procedures, or technical assistance that your team has developed.

To connect with others in the field to share coping strategies, register for Virtual Office Hours.
1. A 10,000 foot view
2. What communication offers
3. Next: sustainability
The Psychological Trauma That Awaits Our Doctors and Nurses

Don’t underestimate the moral anguish of deciding who gets a ventilator.

By Jennifer Senior
Opinion columnist

March 29, 2020
Power down, renew, reboot

To my fellow clinicians everywhere: we're in a marathon, not a sprint. So what you do to sustain yourself is more important than ever. This podcast is meant

https://www.decompress.how/

e-mail tlmusic@seattlecca.org
NEXT WEBINAR: April 22, 12noon PST

COVID CONVERSATIONS: Team Approach to Assisting Patients with Advance Care Planning

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