

COVID-19 Conversation Starters – for health, aged care and general practice workforce

- You mentioned you were concerned about what would happen if you got the virus. Would you like to talk about this some more?
- How are you going with your isolation? What do you think would happen if you got COVID-19?
- Because of your severe lung (heart/ kidney/ cancer etc) disease you are more likely to get really sick if you got the virus. Have you thought about this?
- I like to talk to my patients about what medical treatment they would want if they became unwell with COVID-19. It's such a challenging situation. Have you thought about this?
- Can we talk about your future health care and any preferences you have?
- COVID-19 can cause people to become suddenly and seriously unwell, requiring intensive treatment in hospital. This is often for a long period and unfortunately, many won't recover. Many older people prefer to limit certain treatments such as CPR or being placed on a ventilator. What are your thoughts about this?
- You just told me that if you got COVID-19 you would not want to go to hospital. Can we talk about what that may mean and how we can support you to stay at home?
- What does it mean to you to live well? What are your values, beliefs or preferences about medical treatment?
- Have you thought about what medical treatment or health outcomes that are acceptable or unacceptable to you?
- Would you want to be transferred to hospital if you became unwell or would you prefer to stay here?
- Have you spoken with your family about your choices?
- Who would you trust to make your medical treatment decisions if you were unable to talk due to illness? What would you like them to say?
- Do your loved ones know your wishes and preferences? I encourage you to discuss these with them.
- It is really helpful for you and for your family to discuss what you would want to happen if you got really sick.
- Would you be willing to document your preferences and values in an Advance Care Directive? This can help others to know what you want if you can't say so in future.