

## Phrases that Work – Useful language for Hospice Discussions

### Identify Decision Makers:

- “Is there anyone you rely on to help you make important decisions?”
- “Who should be here to support you, when we discuss your results?”

### Assess Understanding:

- “What do you understand about your medical condition?”
- “Have other doctors talked to you about what this latest problem might mean for you?”
- “From what you know, how do you see the next few months going for you?”

### Define goals:

- “What do you hope for most, in the next few months?”
- “What worries you most, as you look forward?”

### Reframe goals:

- “I wish we had better news, but unfortunately, I believe time may be shorter than we hoped”

### Identify needs for care:

- “It can be hard to care for a loved one at home, and no one can do it alone. Have you thought about what kind of support might help?”
- “Would it help if we look for ways to bring more care to you?”

**(Continued on the back)**

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### Summarize/link goals to needs:

- “So it sounds like your main goal is \_\_\_ (stay home, comfort, family); to do that, we will need \_\_\_”.

### Introduce Hospice:

- “One of the best ways to give you the help you need in a program called hospice. Have you heard of hospice?”
- “Hospice is able to provide more support with your goals, than most other home programs”
- “The hospice team has a lot of experience caring for seriously ill patients at home and can provide more support after-hours instead of calling 911”.

### Respond to emotions:

- “You seem surprised to learn how sick you are”
- “I can see it is not easy for you to talk about hospice”
- “Many people are understandably upset to learn how ill their loved one is and that hospice is an option”
- “This is hard”
- “Tell me what is upsetting you most”
- “Hospice doesn’t help people die sooner. It helps them die naturally in their own time”
- “Hospice helps people live as well as they can for as long as they can”
- “Hospice goals are to improve your quality of life and help you make the most of the time we have left”

### Reinforce commitment to care:

- “Let’s think this over for a day or two; you know I will continue to care for you, whatever your decision”

### Recommending Hospice:

- “I think hospice may be your best choice right now, but of course the final decision is yours”
- “Hospice could be very helpful to you in the ways we have discussed, but I realize it is a big decision. I would like to arrange for a hospice nurse to visit you so you can have your questions answered and decide for yourself. “