

Model of Dignity and Dignity-Conserving Interventions for Patients Nearing Death

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Patient Concern	What to ask...	What to do...
Factors/Subthemes	Dignity-Related Questions	Therapeutic Interventions
ILLNESS-RELATED		
Symptom distress Physical distress	<i>How comfortable are you? Is there anything we can do to make you more comfortable?</i>	Vigilance to symptom management Frequent assessment Application of comfort care
Psychological distress	<i>How are you coping with what is happening to you?</i>	Assume a supportive stand Empathetic listening Referral to counselling
Medical uncertainty	<i>Is there anything further about your illness that you would like to know? Are you getting all the information you feel you need?</i>	Upon request, provide accurate, understandable information and strategies to deal with possible future crises
Death anxiety	<i>Are there things about the later stages of your illness that you would like to discuss?</i>	
Independence	<i>Has your illness made you more dependent on others?</i>	Have patient participate in decision making, regarding both medical and personal issues
Cognitive acuity	<i>Are you have any difficulty with your thinking?</i>	Treat delirium When possible, avoid sedating medication(S)
Functional capacity	<i>How much are you able to do for yourself?</i>	Use orthotics, physiotherapy, and occupational therapy
DIGNITY-CONSERVING REPERTOIRE		
Continuity of self	<i>Are there things about you that this disease does not affect?</i>	Acknowledge and take interest in those aspects of the patient's live that he or she most values See the patient as worthy of honor, respect, and esteem
Role preservation	<i>What things did you do before you were sick that were most important to you?</i>	
Maintenance of pride	<i>What about yourself or your life are you most proud of?</i>	

Patient Concern	What to ask...	What to do...
Hopefulness	<i>What is still possible?</i>	Encourage and enable the patient to participate in meaningful or purposeful activities
Autonomy/control	<i>How in control do you feel?</i>	Involve patient in treatment and care decisions
Generativity/legacy	<i>How do you want to be remembered?</i>	Life project (e.g., making audio/video recordings, writing letters, journaling)
Acceptance	<i>How at peace are you with what is happening to you?</i>	Support the patient in his or her outlook Encourage doing things that enhance his or her sense of well-being (e.g. prayer, meditation, light exercise, listening to music)
Resilience/fight spirit	<i>What part of you is strongest right now?</i>	
Living in the moment	<i>Are there things that take your mind away from illness and offer you comfort?</i>	Allow the patient to participate in normal routines or take comfort in momentary distractions (e.g. daily outings, light exercise, listening to music)
Maintaining normalcy	<i>Are there things you still enjoy doing on a regular basis?</i>	
Finding spiritual comfort	<i>Is there a religious or spiritual community that you are, or would like to be, connected with?</i>	Make referrals to chaplain or spiritual leader Enable the patient to participate in particular spiritual and/or culturally-based practices
SOCIAL DIGNITY INVENTORY		
Privacy boundaries	<i>What about your privacy or your body is important to you?</i>	Ask permission to examine patient Proper draping to safeguard and respect privacy
Social support	<i>Who are the people that are most important to you?</i> <i>Who is your closest confidante?</i>	Liberal policies about visitation, rooming in Enlist involvement of wide support network
Care tenor	<i>Is there anything in the way you are treated that is undermining your sense of dignity?</i>	Treat the patient as worthy of honor, esteem, and respect; adopt a stance conveying this
Burden to others	<i>Do you worry about being a burden to others?</i> <i>If so, to whom and in what ways?</i>	Encourage explicitly discussion about these concerns with those they fear they are burdening
Aftermath concerns	<i>What are your biggest concerns for the people you will leave behind?</i>	Encourage the settling of affairs, preparation of an advanced directive, making a will, funeral planning