

Serious Veterinary Illness Conversation Guide

CLINICIAN STEPS

Set up

- Thinking in advance
- Is this okay?
- Hope for best, prepare for worst
- Benefit for patient/family
- No decisions necessary today

Guide (right column)

Act

- Affirm commitment
- Make recommendations about next steps
 - Acknowledge medical realities
 - Summarize key goals/priorities
 - Describe treatment options that reflect both
- Document conversation

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CONVERSATION GUIDE

Understanding

What is your understanding now of where _____ is with his/her illness?

What questions do you have about information your family veterinarian has already shared with you?

Information Preferences

How much information about _____'s illness would you like from me? How much additional information do you feel you need to help make decisions?

FOR EXAMPLE:

Some families like to have lots of information about what to expect, others do not. Some people are very comforted by lots of diagnostic information and some people find this stressful.

Prognosis

Share prognosis as a range, tailored to information preferences. Understand that euthanasia as end point for most patients has tremendous impact on "prognosis". What is acceptable for one family may not be for another.

Goals

If _____'s situation worsens, what are your most important goals?

Fears / Worries

What are your biggest fears and worries about _____'s health?

Function

What abilities or activities are so critical to _____'s life that you can't imagine him/her living without them?

Trade-offs

If _____ becomes sicker, how much are you willing to go through for the possibility of gaining more time together?

Aid in Dying

What are your beliefs surrounding euthanasia?