

Introducing a 'Preferred priorities of Care' conversation

New documentation and introduction of new guidelines for care means that many professionals have to talk to patients about their priorities for care at the end of life.

Introducing a conversation about priorities and wishes in end of life care may lead naturally on from the assessment of the patients perceptions and expectations, but may require the professional to introduce the subject.

- ◆ Within the assessment of look for cues which will enable you to explore end of life issues.
 - *"As we were talking you mentioned the fact that you knew things were getting worse and that you were dying"*
- ◆ Use those cues to help you empathise, negotiate to ask about the patient's wishes and priorities.
 - *"It seems as if things are very hard for you. Is it OK if I ask you more about that?"*
 - *"... have you had any thoughts about where you might like to be cared for?"*
 - *"... what thoughts have you had about that ...?"*

If no cues are given about death and dying

- ◆ Within your assessment ask the patient about their view of the future (see page 30)
 - *"You have told me about your current difficulties and we clearly need to look at those. Before we do, is it OK if I ask you how you see things going in the future?"*
 - *"You motioned things are difficult at the moment ... have you had any thoughts about what may happen in the future?"*
- ◆ When talking about priorities of care. Remember to empathise and explicitly acknowledge what is said
 - *"So you feel your wife would not cope if you were at home, although you would like to stay here. That must be very hard for you?"*
- ◆ Clarify the elements which are unclear
 - *"If its OK, Could you tell me why you feel she would not cope".*