Serious Illness Conversation Guide

Three steps:

1. **Set up**
   - Thinking in advance
   - Is this okay?
   - Hope for best, prepare for worst
   - Benefit for patient/family
   - No decisions necessary today
   - Deep breath
   - Review the chart

2. **Follow the Guide**
   1. **Understanding**
      - What is your understanding now of where you are with your illness?
   2. **Information Preferences**
      - How much information about what is likely to be ahead with your illness would you like from me?
      
      *FOR EXAMPLE:* Some patients like to know about time, others like to know what to expect, others like to know both.

      **Prognosis**
      - Share prognosis as a range, tailored to information preferences.

   3. **Goals**
      - If your health situation worsens, what are your most important goals?
   4. **Fears / Worries**
      - What are your biggest fears and worries about the future with your health?
   5. **Function**
      - What abilities are so critical to your life that you can't imagine living without them?
   6. **Trade-offs**
      - If you become sicker, how much are you willing to go through for the possibility of gaining more time?
   7. **Family**
      - How much does your family know about your priorities and wishes?
      
      *TIP:* Suggest bringing family and/or health care agent to next visit to discuss together.

3. **Act!**
   - Affirm commitment
   - Make recommendations about next steps
   - Acknowledge medical realities
   - Summarize key goals/priorities
   - Describe treatment options that reflect both
   - Document conversation
   - Provide patient with Family Communication Guide

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