

# How to Talk About End-of-Life Concerns

Taken from the work of Joanne Lynn, MD, Americans for Better Care of the Dying,  
[www.abcd-caring.org](http://www.abcd-caring.org)

1. Push yourself to take the openings that come up in conversation.
2. Talk naturally about a time when the person will no longer be alive.
3. Talk about current hopes and fears.
4. Shape conversations by looking at the past, present and future.  
Look at the past and share memories and stories.  
Talk about the present, what is going well and going badly right now.  
Ask about hopes and dreams for the future, explore practical problems, and discuss how long the person may live.

## Words to Try: For families talking with a sick person

### When you think you want to say: Try this instead:

You are going to be just fine.

Are there some things that worry you?

Don't talk like that ! You can beat this!

It must be hard to come to terms with all this.

I can't see how anyone can help.

We will be there for you, always.

I just can't talk about this.

I am feeling a little overwhelmed right now.  
Can we talk about this later tonight?

What do the doctors know?  
You might live forever.

Do you think the doctors are right? How does it seem to you?

Please don't give up. I need you here.

I need you here. I will miss you terribly. But we will get through it somehow.

There has to be something more to do.

Let's be sure we get the best of medical treatments, But let's be together when we have done all we can.

Don't be glum. You will get well.

It must be hard. Can I just sit with you for a while?

### Oklahoma Resources:

Oklahoma Palliative Care Resource Center: <http://okpalliative.nursing.ouhsc.edu/>

Senior Law Resource Center: [www.oklahomaseniorlaw.org](http://www.oklahomaseniorlaw.org)

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