



## COMMUNICATION

COVID EMERGENCY



**Basic tips for managing communication** with families and patients who are deteriorating, aimed at helping colleagues heavily occupied with the emergency

In the case of a

### CONSCIOUS PATIENT

Tips for communicating  
with the **PATIENT**

With the patient

**Avoid sentences  
such as**



*“There is nothing more we can do for you.”*

*“Don’t worry, you’ll die quietly and peacefully  
with these drugs.”*

*“These drugs will let you die without suffering.”*

*“You must be strong/brave for your family.”*

*“You’ll see, our treatment will stop you being  
anxious or scared.”*

With the patient

**RECOMMENDED  
expressions**



*“Good morning Mr/Mrs/Ms  
(address the person by name),  
I am Doctor... (introduce yourself by name)*

*...we’re doing our best to look after you and  
take care of you...”*

*“I understand that this is an emotional time,  
anyone would be scared/anxious (repeat the  
term used by the person)...  
...it is normal to be worried and scared.”*

*“We are doing our best to help you and  
make sure you don’t suffer.”*

*“I am very sorry that you cannot have your  
loved ones around you, but as you can see,  
you are here with us, you are not alone, we  
will stay with you.”*

*“Even though your family cannot stay in the  
ward, they are very close. They call every  
day to find out how you are, and we make*

In the case of a  
**CONSCIOUS OR UNCONSCIOUS PATIENT**

Tips for communicating  
with the **FAMILY**

When on the phone  
to the **family**  
**Avoid sentences  
such as**



**DO NOT** introduce yourself in an  
impersonal way:

***“Good evening, I’m the doctor on duty.”***

Never refer to the patient by saying:

***“A patient in this pathological stage...”***

**DO NOT** say that the patient is worse in a  
way that is too direct or blunt by using  
sentences such as:

***“There is nothing more we can do for  
your father/mother/etc.”***

***“Don’t worry, your father/mother/etc.  
will die peacefully with these drugs.”***

***“These drugs will let him or her die  
without suffering.”***

When on the phone  
to the **family**  
**RECOMMENDED  
expressions**



Introduce yourself by your full name and role:

***“I’m so sorry that due to this awful  
situation we cannot meet in person to talk  
about your father/mother/wife/etc.”***

Try to provide information gradually, if possible, using  
simple language:

***“We understand your  
anxiety/fear/desperation... it is perfectly  
reasonable.”***

Provide information gradually:

***“We have done everything in our power  
for you/your father/mother/brother/sister  
at this very difficult time...”***

***“...Unfortunately, medicine has its limits  
and now with Mr/Mrs/Ms (name the  
patient) we have reached that limit.”***

***“...his/her condition is deteriorating...  
We are so sorry.***

***At the moment we are doing our best to  
prevent any suffering...”***

***“...he/she will be settled and won’t feel  
any pain...”***

***“...he/she will be settled at the end and  
won’t feel any pain in the final moments of  
his/her life...”***