

COVID Ready Communication Playbook

Around the world, as healthcare providers work to care for patients during the COVID-19 pandemic, we're facing more challenging conversations with patients and families about serious illness.

In Hong Kong, our hospitals have had to restrict access to relatives in order to minimize infection risk to our patients. It has made our work in communicating with patients and families more difficult but also highlights the importance of effective communication. How do we keep patients and families informed about their illness? How do we facilitate goodbyes between family members and dying patients? How do we deal with the emotions running high amongst our patients, families, and ourselves? In the event that a surging caseload outstrips resources, how do we prepare for the tough conversations when we are left without enough hospital beds?

In light of these challenges, we are sharing a communication primer for COVID-19 developed by VitalTalk, a non-profit start-up founded by communication experts to provide clinicians with serious illness communication training. This primer, translated into many languages, is a resource for clinicians around the world who find themselves ill-equipped for difficult topics during COVID-19. Some may have immediate relevance to our situation in Hong Kong, whereas others can help to prepare us in times of need.

Hope that you may find this helpful to communicate better in caring for patients during this challenging time.

English: https://www.vitaltalk.org/wp-content/uploads/VitalTalk_COVID_English.pdf

Traditional Chinese: https://www.vitaltalk.org/wp-content/uploads/VitalTalk_COVID_Chinese-Traditional.pdf