

VENT WITHDRAWAL CONVERSATION

NOTE: This script pertains to crisis care situations with triage standards of care.

Clinician	Family
1. Get ready	
I've heard from the triage people. This will be a hard conversation to have. "Hello, is Ms. Brown?"	Yes, that's me
2. Understand what they know	
You talked to my colleague yesterday about your father, do I have that right?	Yes
What did you take away?	He's sort of stable on the ventilator.
3. Inform with a headline	
I have some serious news. He is getting worse. His condition has worsened to the point where we need to change his care. I'm afraid he's dying.	Oh gosh what do you mean?
His COVID has gotten so bad that he will not make it. We will have to take him off the ventilator	You're just going to take him off!?! He'll die! Isn't taking him off the ventilator my decision?
Normally yes it would be your decision. Because of this horrible epidemic, now we are following special guidelines.	Are you kidding me?
4. Deepen	
I wish things were different.	This is a nightmare.
I can't imagine what this is like. I can see how much you care about him.	Oh my gosh...
I suspect that you never expected the end of his life to come like this	Of course not.
This pandemic is changing everything, I'm sorry.	Now what?
5. Equip	
I want you to know that we can make sure he is comfortable. We can give him a peaceful death. We will pay close attention to shortness of breath, or any other signs of discomfort, and give medications and other treatments that enable him to die peacefully.	Wow. What do I do? Can I come to the hospital?
We will find a way for you to be with him, even if it is by tablet or phone, so that you can say anything you want to say.	I can't believe this is happening. Is my father being singled out?
No. because of this horrible epidemic we are applying the same rules to everybody.	This is unfair.
This is unfair This is a horrible situation.	I need a couple of minutes to wrap my head around this.
I'll stay right here.	

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