

Use the following examples to help initiate and maintain conversations with patients:

- How was your night? Did you get some sleep?
- How are you feeling today?
 - Is that better, worse, or the same as yesterday?
- If the patient has pictures, flowers, or gifts in the room, comment on them:
 - Those flowers smell lovely and really brighten up your room.
 - Those balloons add some fun to the room. Who sent them?
 - That is a lovely picture. Would you mind telling me about it?
- I've noticed you've been watching TV for a while. Are there any good shows on today?
- What TV show do you like to watch at home?
- Do you have any kids or pets at home?
 - If so, ask them questions about each, or ask if they have pictures to show.
- Ask about hobbies: What do you like to do when you're at home and feeling well? Then follow up.
 - What's your favorite fishing spot?
 - How often do you and your friends go to bingo?
 - Do you knit a lot of things for your family and friends?
 - What do you do with all those vegetables from your garden?
- Ask if they've watched the weather lately, and if so, ask about the forecast.
- Ask about their favorite restaurant or recipe.
 - Ask them to explain how they cook their favorite dish.
- If your patient introduces a difficult topic like depression or death, pull up a chair, tell them you have time to talk and would like to hear what is bothering them. Instead of offering advice, ask open ended questions that further the conversation and allow them to express their thoughts.