

A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a bouquet of flowers. The bouquet includes pink and white flowers, yellow buds, and green foliage. The person is wearing a light grey sweater and has two gold rings on their fingers. The background is slightly blurred, showing an outdoor setting.

Vol. 4

Conversations over a Cuppa



Irish
Hospice
Foundation

When You Are
Seriously Ill

Maybe it's time to start

Conversations over a Cuppa is something we would like to encourage in every household in Ireland. Especially at the moment when death and illness feel closer to us and we may be find ourselves thinking about it more often.

We hope it won't happen to us, or those we love. Yet, the experiences of illness, death and dying are all around us. At any time, any one of us, our families or friends could be affected. It's not a choice; it's something that happens.

Conversations over a Cuppa is a series of four helpful and practical guides to support and encourage you to plan ahead, talk with others and offer practical support to those facing serious illness and end of life.

A problem shared is a often a problem halved.

You may have lived with a serious condition for all or most of your life. You may be experiencing the worsening of a disease over many years. You may have suddenly and unexpectedly been given news about a newly diagnosed advanced illness.

This is never an easy thing to think about or talk to others about. But this guide may help.

Conversations over a cuppa series:

- Vol 1. Dying to talk - how to have a general conversation
- Vol 2. When someone you know is seriously ill ... what to say when you don't know what to say
- Vol 3. When someone you love is seriously ill
- Vol 4. When you are seriously ill



You are not alone

Living with a serious illness brings many difficulties and challenges. It can take all your energy just to get through each day, and there may be days when you feel you're just not coping and can't go on.

Even though it can be hard to know what to do, it is important to remember that you are not alone. There are others, either amongst your own family and friends, in your community or in the health and social services who are available to help and support you.

It's true that talking won't take away what you are going through. However, deciding to share how you are feeling, what you are worried about, or your fears for the future, can be a way of managing and of taking some control.

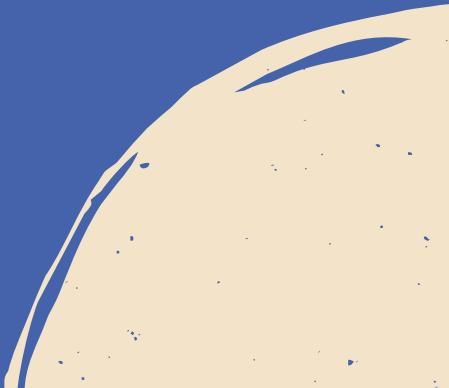
The old saying 'A problem shared is a problem halved' really does apply.

Talking can make a difference by:

Helping you to sort out your thoughts, feelings and concerns.

- Letting you voice your thoughts.
- Saying out loud the things that you are worried or frightened about can help make them more manageable.

Allowing you to explore:

- your options for treatment
 - the kind of care and support you'd like
 - where you'd like to be cared for
- 

Deciding what is right for you

If you are worried about your illness, concerned about how you are coping, or anxious about what the future may hold, it's likely that family members and friends are thinking about the same things.

Often, people don't say anything because it's hard to find the right words, or for fear of causing upset.

If there are things on your mind, think about;

- Who you would like to talk to
- The time and the place to begin the conversation - some things need more privacy and time than others

You can start to talk by saying something simple like:

'There are some things that I'd like to talk to you about'
Will you put the kettle on and we can have a talk'

You may want to include in your conversation:

- Making decisions about treatment
- Expressing your worries about the future
- Discussing where you would like to be cared for as your illness progresses
- Making a Will
- Talking to other family members, including children
- Making amends and seeking forgiveness
- Saying 'Thank-you' and 'I love you'

It's likely that, as you talk together, you may feel emotional and become upset. Sharing how you are feeling is a way of coping and supporting one another.

Useful Resources

Think Ahead

www.thinkahead.ie

Irish Hospice Foundation's Care and Inform Hub

<https://hospicefoundation.ie/covid19careandinform/>

Irish Hospice Foundation Bereavement Support Line

Freephone 1800 80 70 77. Available Monday-Friday, 10am-1pm

<https://hospicefoundation.ie/bereavement-2-2/bereavement-support-line/>

Bereaved.ie

<https://hospicefoundation.ie/bereavement-2-2/covid19-care-and-inform/>

Your Mental Health

<https://bit.ly/39FhOZ8>

Children and Grief

www.childhoodbereavement.ie

Citizens information

<https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/>

HSE

www.hse.ie

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