

Structuring your conversations

A talking guide to support patient/healthcare professional (HCP) communications

Following your Advance Breast Cancer (ABC) diagnosis, you may become concerned or worried about particular aspects of your life and what may happen in the future. It's important to discuss these concerns with your doctor or nurse so they may provide you with the most appropriate support. The topics below have been designed to prompt your conversations with your doctor and act as a guide to ensure you consider all aspects of the impact ABC can have.

Prognosis and patient involvement

- Day to day management of diagnosis
- Decision making
- 'Do not resuscitate' discussion

Side effects/pain

- Severity of side effects
- Level of pain
 - Where the pain is
 - How it affects your day to day life
 - What makes it worse
 - What makes it better
- Frequency of pain/side effects
- Change to physical ability
- Tiredness/fatigue
- Available pain relief options

Family

- Informing family/friends
- Impact on children/teenagers
- Available support

Finances

- Reduced income
- Paying bills/mortgage
- Additional cost of hospital visits (e.g. travel)

Body image

- Physical body changes (e.g. mastectomy, scars, loss of hair)
- Psychological effect of these physical changes (e.g. loss of identity/confidence)
- Available options (e.g. breast prostheses, bras and wigs)

Sexual issues

- Loss/decrease of libido
 - Factors that may affect sex drive (e.g. low self-esteem, depression)
- Losing your sense of intimacy (e.g. feeling isolated, abandoned)
- Physical changes that may affect intercourse

Work

- Informing your employer
- Time needed for appointments
- Ability to work
- Possibility of working from home

Spiritual issues

- Coming to terms with ABC
- Having faith
- Finding peace



Notes
