

## In case of distress

The topics discussed with individuals and family / carers during advance care planning can be sensitive in nature and understandably may be distressing. In the event that an individual or family / carer becomes distressed during an advance care planning discussion, the following guidelines can be used.

## Indications of distress:

- ▶ A participant indicates they are feeling a high level of stress or emotional distress
- ▶ They exhibit behaviours that are suggestive of emotional distress e.g. shaking, uncontrollable crying

### STAGE 1:

#### Response

- ▶ Stop the conversation
- ▶ Offer immediate support
- ▶ Assess their mental status:
  - Can you tell me what thoughts you are having?
  - Can you tell me how you're feeling?
  - Do you feel safe?
  - Do you feel as if you could go about your normal day?

## Review

- ▶ Offer the participant the following options:
  - Continue immediately
  - Continue after a break
  - Reschedule
  - Withdraw
- ▶ If the participant feels able to carry on, continue with the discussion
- ▶ If participant is unable to continue, go to stage 2 ➡➡



## STAGE 2:

### Response

- ▶ Remove the participant from the discussion and accompany them to a quiet area if appropriate. If the discussion is taking place remotely, stay connected via video or phone call.
- ▶ Encourage the participant to contact their GP or their health provider or with participant consent, contact them on their behalf
- ▶ Provide contact numbers for the Samaritans if appropriate (see below)

## STAGE 3:

### Review

- ▶ Follow participant up with a courtesy call if they consent
- ▶ Encourage participant to call if they experience distress in the hours/days following the discussion
- ▶ Discuss and reflect with a senior member of staff whether there were any triggers which that led to the incident

The individual or family / carer should be signposted to support organisations which they can contact.

