Do the patient and/or their family understand the acute problem that has arisen?
No
Outline the clinical scenario and likely prognosis. Normalize the uncertainty.
Yes
"While no one can tell you for certain how long you have left to live, I am concerned..."
I am really worried about <the patient>, he/she is really sick
Does the patient have goals in treatment?
No
Outline the clinical scenario, the possible treatments and their likely outcomes. Do the patient and/or their family define
Yes
If you were near the end of your life, what would be important you?
What health states would you find unacceptable. For example would you not want to be "kept alive with machines"
Review what treatments would or would not match the patient's goals
Have patient and/or their family decided on a treatment goal?
No
Ask if you can make a suggestion. Reassure the SDM (if applicable)
Yes
You are not "killing <the patient>" you are helping us understand what their wishes would have been.
If <the patient> were here with us now, what do you think he would want?"
If <the patient> could have this conversation with us, what would <the patient> say about this situation?
I can't imagine how difficult it must be to try to speak for <the patient> Thank you for being here for <the patient>
Clarify summarize and document