

ReSPECT Form – Section 3

Example Questions that can support the conversation

Section 3 captures what matters most to the person in an emergency. These questions help guide open and honest discussions.

Tips for Staff

- Use the person's own words.
- Keep the language clear and avoid assumptions.
- Focus on what matters to them.
- Clear notes help with later clinical decisions.

1. Understanding What Matters Most

- What matters most to you if you became suddenly unwell?
- When you think about an emergency, what would you want your care to focus on?
- What outcomes feel most important to you?

2. Daily Life and Personal Values

- What does a good day look like for you?
- What helps you feel like yourself?
- Are there things that help you stay comfortable or calm?

3. Worries or Fears

- Is there anything you're worried about when it comes to your health or treatment?
- Are there situations you would find difficult or unacceptable?
- What would you most want to avoid if you became seriously unwell?

4. Care Preferences

- If you couldn't speak for yourself, what would you want the clinical team to prioritise?
- How would you feel about going to hospital if you became very unwell?
- People vary in how they feel about emergency treatments.

5. Personal Circumstances

- Who are the important people you'd want involved if you couldn't make decisions?
- Are there cultural, spiritual, or religious needs we should know about?
- Is there anything about your home or daily life we should consider?

6. Checking Understanding

- Does what I've written reflect what you've told me?
- Is there anything you'd like to add or change?
- Is this the message you want others to use if you can't explain things yourself?

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Example Summaries of useful and less useful information

A good section 3 summary should answer the following question:

“If another clinician read this in an emergency, would they clearly understand what matters to this person?”

Tips for writing a useful summary:

- Write 3–5 plain sentences.
- No jargon.
- Use the person’s words.

It is helpful to cover the following points:

1. What matters most
2. What a good day looks like
3. What they want to avoid
4. Any clear preferences if they can’t speak
5. Anything important about people, beliefs, or circumstances

Some useful examples

What I most value	What I most fear/wish to avoid
“My faith is important to me, and I would want time for prayer if I were dying.”	“I am worried about being kept alive if I cannot recognise people.”
“My son should be contacted first if I can’t speak for myself.”	I would want staff to avoid treatments that would leave me confused or distressed.”
“A good day is being able to talk with my family and watch television.”	I would want to avoid being taken to hospital if it won’t help me recover.”
“Being comfortable and not being in pain matters most to me.”	“I want to avoid repeated hospital admissions if my condition is getting worse and not improving.”
“If I became very unwell, I would want care to focus on comfort rather than prolonging life.”	“I am concerned about being rushed into treatments without time for explanations or discussion with my family.”

Some less useful examples

Instead of this	Try this
“Wants what is best for them.”	“If I become very unwell, I would want decisions to focus on what will genuinely help me recover, not treatments that are unlikely to work.”
“Patient values good care and comfort.”	“Being comfortable and free from pain matters most to me, even if that means not having all possible treatments.”
“Quality of life is important.”	“A good quality of life for me means being able to recognise my family and talk with them.”
“Doesn’t want extreme measures.”	“I would want to avoid invasive or intensive treatments if they are unlikely to improve my quality of life.”
“Does not want unnecessary treatment.”	“I would want to avoid treatments that are unlikely to help me recover or improve my comfort.”
“Wants to avoid distress.”	“I would want to avoid situations that cause me distress, such as being rushed into decisions or not having things explained clearly.”