

Last Dance Film

Resource Guide



Last Dance - Resource Guide

Introduction

Last Dance is a short film commissioned by NHS Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board (ICB), which seeks to prompt discussion and reflection, for health and care staff. It focuses on uncertainty, communication, and missed opportunities near the end of life.

The resource guide aims to build confidence and awareness around end-of-life conversations and planning.

Key points

- The film uses fictional characters based on real experiences
- It encourages timely, honest conversations
- It acknowledges emotional impact and uncertainty
- There is no single “right answer”

Focus areas

- Person-centred communication
- Recognising the last phase of life
- Managing uncertainty
- Understanding roles across the MDT
- Knowing where to find further support and training

Using the guide in a session (facilitators and participants)

Health and care staff will manage situations with their own style and will develop this over time and with experience. The important thing is to start having more conversations, identify opportunities and have the confidence not to shy away from patients’ questions.

The guide supports a structured session of at least **one hour**, including self-assessment, film viewing, discussion, and reflection.

General guidance notes for facilitators

A facilitator guides participation by setting a safe, inclusive tone, prompting reflection, and keeping the group focused and engaged.

- Guide learners through the process, encouraging active participation, collaboration and critical thinking.
- Agree ground rules that create an inclusive, supportive and psychologically safe environment.
- Prompt reflection and deepen learning through questioning and discussion.

Last Dance - Resource Guide

- Manage group dynamics, address emerging conflict, and ensure balanced contributions.
- Use facilitation techniques to maintain structure, pace and engagement.

The film explores uncertainty and grief, and it may bring up strong or personal reactions. Participants should feel able to pause or step away if they need to.

Last Dance - Resource Guide

Session flow

- Facilitator introduces the session learning outcomes and structure of the session. Agree any ground rules about confidentiality, respect, etc
- Participants complete a short self-assessment - help practitioners reflect on current capabilities and levels of existing knowledge, skills and confidence
- Watch the full film through once from start to finish. Participants may want to make notes as they watch the clips
- Re-watch some key scenes using the timestamps and use the reflective question section to support discussion. Allow time for discussion of questions.
- Once the sections of the film have been completed, ask participants to complete the self-assessment again. This will help capture any improvement in confidence or skills and assist them to identify further areas for study and personal development
- Provide practitioners with the link to the training framework for further education and training resources. There are also phrases and reflection questions for participants in the appendices.

After watching the film through once, discuss some initial reflections and observations. Some questions to guide you are noted below.

Questions

- What did you observe?
- What emotions did you experience watching the film? Why do you think you felt that way?
- Is there a particular moment from the film that resonated with you? Either from your professional or personal experience.
- Did any moment in the film frustrate you or make you feel angry.
- Did you experience any negative feelings?

Last Dance - Resource Guide

Now use the time stamp to focus on some of the main scenes from the film.

Reflection Scene 1 - July Trish in ED meets Dr Tim for the first time	Time stamp: 1.48 – 2.55
Focus	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Missed opportunities• Jargon• Lack of clarity• Time pressure	
Key Themes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No introductions or checking understanding• Vague language about prognosis/terminology• Unclear responsibility for conversations• Environment as a barrier - Is he too busy to do this right now? Is this the right environment or the right time for the conversation? How long would it take?• Should this be passed onto a colleague? Whose job is it anyway?	
Questions for discussion	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What opportunities were missed in this interaction?2. How could the conversation have been started differently?3. Whose role is it to begin future planning conversations?<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. This is not only a doctor's job. The whole MDT should take opportunities. Consider other roles; (e.g. therapists, pharmacist, ward clerk, chaplain) How far should they go? <p>Have you heard of / do you use the <i>surprise</i> question - "Would you be surprised if this person died in the next 12 months?"</p>	

Last Dance - Resource Guide

Reflection Scene 2 - September Trish and the Community Nurse at home, talking about the future when family arrives.	Time stamp: 3.31 – 4.04
Focus	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interruptions• Family dynamics• Timing	
Key Themes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attempt to open a future-focused conversation• Family presence changes the dynamic• Importance of consent and pacing	
Questions for discussion	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How would you check if the person is ready to talk?2. How can family be involved without taking over?3. What other ways could this conversation continue later?	
Other ways to facilitate a conversation –	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Future date• Give more information• Highlight the benefits for the individual and family.• Don't talk about health. Start with being inquisitive and listening. Poor to do too much talking.• What do they think? Values, fears, current situation	

Last Dance - Resource Guide

Reflection Scene 3 - October Trish back in hospital, Dr Tim talks about planning for the future.	Time stamp: 4.05 – 5.17
Focus	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Environment• Language• Clarity	
Key Themes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Distractions and lack of privacy• Unclear explanations about deterioration• Distractions and lack of privacy• Unclear explanations about deterioration	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What made this conversation difficult?2. How could clarity have been improved?3. How could the MDT support follow-up after discharge?	

Last Dance - Resource Guide

Reflection Scene 4 – November Community Nurse visit. Dan mentioned family wedding. Community Nurse returns to the house to talk about the future.	Time stamp: 5.19 – 8.05
Focus	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Honesty• Empathy• What matters.	
Key Themes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deterioration is more visible• Balancing hope with realism• Values, goals, and quality of life• Continuity across services	
Questions for discussion	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How would you approach this conversation?2. What does “not giving up” mean in practice?3. How can values and wishes be shared across the team? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What tools/templates do you have that you could use to support conversations?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Orange folder / ReSPECT / ACP document• What support could be provided for Dan and the family?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Carers hub, charities, hospice contacts (bereavement support)• Should be a continuation of chat with hospital doctor, hospital nurse, GP, frailty matron, physio etc. Therapists often get values and fears - do they highlight these to other staff and do other staff look for them in the notes entry?	

Last Dance - Resource Guide

Appendix 1 – Future Care Planning discussions

Discussing future planning or end of life care with people who may not realise they are approaching end of life is a delicate and important responsibility for all practitioners. These conversations require empathy, sensitivity, and clear communication. Below are some principles and examples of phrases to help initiate these discussions gently and respectfully.

Core principles

- **Build trust and rapport** - start with open-ended questions about the person's life, values and what matters most to them
- **Check understanding**
- **Use clear, honest language** - avoid jargon and choose words that are honest but not alarming.
- **Offer support** - reassure the person that you are there to support them, and that their wishes and needs remain paramount.
- **Listen and allow silence** – be present and minimise distractions and interruptions.
- **Revisit conversations over time** - take time and introduce end of life and future care planning. Be prepared to start and revisit these conversations, working at the individual's and their family's pace.
- **Document and share key points** - record outline conversations so the colleagues (or others involved in providing support) are aware and may pick up cues if they are visiting or engaging with the individual subsequently.

Questions for reflection

- How do you usually assess someone's understanding?
- What helps you stay present in difficult conversations?
- How well are conversations shared across your team?

Last Dance - Resource Guide

Appendix 2 - Examples of approaches and phrases

Exploring understanding and values:

- “I would like to talk with you about how things have been going and what's most important to you as we look ahead. Would that be OK?”
- “Can you share with me what you understand about your health at the moment?”
- “As we are thinking about your care, it helps me to know what matters most to you - what brings you comfort or joy day today come on what does a good day look like for you?”

Introducing the possibility of change:

- “Sometimes, as conditions change, it helps us to talk about what we might expect and how we might make sure that your care reflects your wishes and preferences.”
- “I wonder if we could talk about what might happen if your health were to change, and how you would like us to support you in those situations?”
- “Many people find it helpful to discuss what's important to them, in case there are decisions to be made in the future.”

Discussing future planning:

- “Have you ever thought about the kind of care you would want if things became more difficult or you were less well?”
- “If your health were to get worse, are there things that you would want us to prioritise in your care?”
- “It is normal for people to hope for the best, and at the same time, we also should plan for any possibility. Would you be open to talking about both?”
- “Would you like anyone else close to you to be part of these conversations, so your wishes are understood unsupported?”
- “I know things have been a bit uncertain lately. Sometimes it helps to talk about what's important do you if your health were to change, so we can make sure your care always reflects what matters to you both. Would you be comfortable about talking about that today?”

Follow-on phrases:

These can be used to continue the conversation once the initial question has been acknowledged:

- “What would help you feel more supported right now?”
- “Would you like someone close to you to join us for this conversation?”
- “We can take this at your pace. You don't need to decide everything today.”

Last Dance - Resource Guide

- “Let’s talk about what’s most important to you so your care reflects your wishes.”

Dealing with questions such as “I feel I am getting worse / weaker / more poorly?”

- “Tell me what changes you have noticed or what’s worrying you.
- “There have been some changes in your health recently, and it’s understandable to feel concerned. Let’s talk about what these changes mean for you and how we can best support you.”
- “It looks like things have changed / become more difficult for you. I want to make sure you understand what’s happening and that we plan your care in a way that reflects what matters most to you.”
- “That’s a really important question. Can you tell me what’s making you ask it today? It will help me understand what you’re feeling and what you already know about your condition.”
- “I can hear how worried you are. Let’s talk through what we know, what might happen, and what matters most to you so we can make sure you feel safe and supported.”

Last Dance - Resource Guide

Appendix 3 - Additional Questions for group discussion or self-reflection

General Questions

- Are you surprised by the statistics around predictable deaths?
- What are your reflections on the past year for Dan and Trish's family?
- Were there moments where you disagreed with the choices made by the characters or professionals? Why?

Suggested Phrases (appendix 2)

- Which phrases feel natural for you to use?
- Which feel harder to say, and why?
- How might you adapt them for your setting?

Reflections on own practice

- How do you deal with uncertainty when dealing with patients and their families / carers?
- Do you have a positive example of when end of life care was handled well?
- Has this film changed how you think about your role in end-of-life care?
- What will you do differently because of this training session / discussion?

Team Working

- How did the wider healthcare team support (or not support) Dan and Trish?
- What could colleagues have done to make things easier for the couple or each other?
- How can team communication be improved? What tools / strategies help in your own area?

Group or self-directed study questions.

- In your experience / area of work what are the early signs of a person's condition that would prompt you to initiate end of life care planning conversations?
- What barriers might prevent you from starting these conversations, and how can you overcome them?
- How have you previously approached discussions about future care needs when a person's health is gradually declining?
- What strategies have you used to ensure that essential topics, such as prognosis and care planning, are not missed due to time pressures or distractions?

Last Dance - Resource Guide

- How confident are you in delivering difficult news to patients and families? What techniques do I use to ensure clarity and compassion?
- How do you check that patients and families have understood the information that you have provided?