

Box 2. The ACA (availability, current issues, anticipation) checklist.

Availability (of the GP for the patient):

1. taking time
2. allowing any subject to be discussed
3. active listening
4. facilitating behaviour (eg empathic, respectful, attentive, occasionally also phoning or visiting the patient spontaneously)
5. shared decision-making with regard to diagnosis and treatment plan
6. accessibility (eg phone numbers)

Current issues (that should be raised by the GP):

1. diagnosis
2. prognosis
3. patient's complaints and worries:
 - physical
4. - psychosocial
5. - spiritual/existential
6. wishes for the present and the coming days
7. unfinished business, bringing life to a close
8. discussing treatment and care options (concerning 1-7)

Anticipating (various scenarios):

1. offering follow-up appointments
2. possible complications
3. wishes for the coming weeks/months (personal wishes as well as preferences with regard to medical decisions)
4. the actual process of dying (final hours/days)
5. end-of-life decisions