

Empathy and Reframing



Empathy allows you to understand and share the feelings and perspectives of patients and their families during their most vulnerable times.

To enhance your empathy skills, practicing reframing is beneficial. Reframing emotions helps shift intense and overwhelming feelings to more positive and manageable ones. By practicing reframing you demonstrate empathy and assist individuals and their families in managing strong emotions during their palliative care journey including the last days and hours of a patient's life.

Catch It, Check It, Change It

Use these simple three steps to help you recognize, evaluate, and reframe emotions to provide empathetic support to patients and their families:

- 1. CATCH IT:** Be aware of the intense emotions expressed by patients and their families, as well as your own feelings. Recognizing these emotional cues is the first step in addressing them appropriately.
- 2. CHECK IT:** Consider the reasons, intensity, and impact of the emotions. This step helps you determine the best response and support for the patient and family.
- 3. CHANGE IT:** Help patients and families in recognizing their emotions and considering them in a different light. If they are experiencing intense emotions, support them to manage and understand the reasons behind their feelings. Reframing emotions into more positive and hopeful ones helps shift their mindset to a better state.

When you use the "Catch It, Check It, Change It" approach it's important to recognize the intensity of the emotions you're trying to reframe. Although there are only four core emotions—happy, sad, angry, and afraid—people experience a range of intensities for each core emotion that can impact their thoughts and actions.

The chart below shows examples of the range of emotional intensity and statements you can use to help reframe emotions.

Basic Emotion	Low Intensity	Moderate Intensity	High Intensity
Happy Ways you can respond...	Pleased <i>"I'm glad your feeling good. Let's enjoy this time."</i>	Cheerful <i>"It's nice to see you in good spirits. How was your day?"</i>	Joyful <i>"It's great to see you so happy. What's making you feel this way?"</i>
Sad Ways you can respond...	Unhappy <i>"I see you're feeling down. Do you want to talk or just sit together?"</i>	Distressed <i>"It's okay to feel upset. What is upsetting you?"</i>	Sorrowful <i>"It's normal to feel really sad. Would you like to talk about it and see if anything might help?"</i>
Afraid Ways you can respond...	Anxious <i>"You seem worried. Do you want to talk about what's bothering you?"</i>	Frightened <i>"Feeling scared is natural. How are you coping with these feeling?"</i>	Terrified <i>"I see you're really frightened. Take a deep breath and let me know what's scaring you."</i>
Angry Ways you can respond...	Annoyed <i>"You look aggravated. What's bothering you?"</i>	Frustrated <i>"I noticed that you seem frustrated. Would you like to talk about what's going on."</i>	Furious <i>"I can see you're really angry. What is causing you to feel like this?"</i>



Established in 1990, the Canadian Home Care Association (CHCA) is a national non-profit membership association dedicated to advancing excellence in home and community care. Our eiCOMPASS Project aims to empower home care providers to deliver emotionally intuitive, competency-based palliative care. We are enhancing the skills of frontline providers and improving team-based care that is compassionate, responsive, and person- and family-centred. [CHCA Website](#) / [X](#) / [LinkedIn](#)

