

THE DESIGN

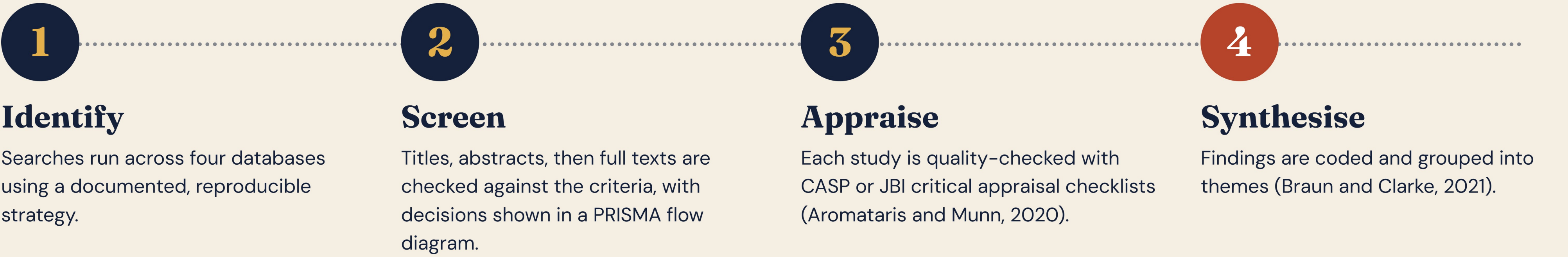
A structured literature review

The project follows PRISMA 2020 reporting guidance (Page et al., 2021). No participants are recruited: it gathers, appraises and synthesises published research. This suits a sensitive topic and lets barriers, strategies and evidence gaps be mapped across many care settings. A comparable review of hospital communication used the same reporting guidance alongside JBI methods (de Vries et al., 2023).

THE QUESTION

What are the main barriers to effective communication in palliative and end-of-life care, and which strategies are supported by evidence to improve shared decision-making?

The review journey



FINDING THE EVIDENCE

Search strategy

Databases

- PubMed
- CINAHL
- Scopus
- Embase

Key terms

- palliative care
- end-of-life
- communication
- decision-making
- advance care planning

Terms are combined with Boolean operators (AND, OR) and the full strategy is reported using PRISMA-S (Rethlefsen et al., 2021). The aim is 50 to 100 sources.

WHO AND WHAT COUNTS

Eligibility criteria

Include

- Peer-reviewed studies
- English language
- Published 2020 to 2026
- Adult palliative populations, families or healthcare professionals

Exclude

- Paediatric-only studies
- Opinion pieces without evidence
- Studies with no accessible full text

MAKING SENSE OF THE FINDINGS

Thematic synthesis in six steps

Themes will be organised around patient, family and professional barriers, cultural, ethical and legal influences, and communication strategies.



Rigour

Clear criteria, a documented search and a reflective log keep decisions transparent. Limitations such as English-only searching and publication bias will be acknowledged.

Ethics

Only published sources are used and no participants are involved, so formal ethical approval is not expected to be required. Sources are cited accurately in UWTSD Harvard style.



References

Aromataris, E. and Munn, Z. (eds.) (2020) *JBI manual for evidence synthesis*. JBI. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.46658/JBIMES-20-01> (Accessed: 14 October 2026).

de Vries, S., Verhoef, M.-J., Vervoort, S.C.J.M., van der Linden, Y.M., Teunissen, S.C.C.M. and de Graaf, E. (2023) 'Barriers and facilitators that hospital clinicians perceive to discuss the personal values, wishes, and needs of patients in palliative care: a mixed-methods systematic review', *Palliative Care and Social Practice*. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/26323524231212510> (Accessed: 14 October 2026).

Rethlefsen, M.L. et al. (2021) 'PRISMA-S: an extension to the PRISMA Statement for reporting literature searches in systematic reviews', *Systematic Reviews*, 10, article 39. Available at:

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2021) *Thematic analysis: a practical guide*. London: SAGE. Available at: <https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/thematic-analysis/book248481> (Accessed: 14 October 2026).

Page, M.J. et al. (2021) 'The PRISMA 2020 statement: an updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews', *BMJ*, 372, n71. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n71> (Accessed: 14 October 2026).