



ADVANCE CARE PLANNING PROCESS AND COMMUNICATION TIPS

Project Compassion creates community and provides support for people living with serious illness, caregiving, end of life and grief.

Preparing for End of Life Includes:

- **understanding** your end of life options and choices
- **evaluating** your choices in the light of your values, beliefs, faith
- **talking** with the people who matter
 - family and friends
 - physicians and other care providers
 - attorney
 - clergy
- **selecting a health care advocate**
- **documenting** your wishes
- **reassessing** as needed

Key Factors to Consider:

- What is your current health status?
- What values and goals influence your thinking?
- What key experiences shape your thinking?
- What does it mean for me to live **well**?

Types of Choices for You to Consider:

- Medical Choices
- Health Care Advocate
- Physical Care Options
- Emotional and Spiritual Support
- Family and Social Support
- Environment of Care
- Wishes at the End of Life
- Organ Donation Choices
- Funeral/Memorial and Burial Plans

Understanding Your Options for Care:

- What are the benefits and burdens of potential treatment options?
- When should medical treatment be initiated, continued, or forgone?
- How will decisions be made?
- Why should decisions be made?
- Who will make healthcare decisions for you if/when you are not able to make your own?

Evaluating Choices in the Light of your Values, Beliefs, Faith:

- What is most important for you to feel your life has quality?
- What fear or worries do you have about your illness or your dying?
- If you have to choose between living longer and quality of life, how would you approach this continuum?
- What additional information do you need about present or future care?
- What sustains you in the face of serious challenges?
- What spiritual or religious beliefs are important to you?
- What do you hope for for yourself?
- What do you hope for for those closest to you?
- What would make your dying most meaningful for you?

Communication is the Key:

Who North Carolinians have talked with about end of life wishes:

- Family and Friends 40%
- Physician 11%
- Attorney 26%
- Spiritual Leaders 6%

Tips for Selecting a Health Care Advocate:

- Someone who can make decisions for you if you are unable to make them
- Someone who knows and understands your wishes
- Someone who can speak effectively for you
- Someone you trust to make the decisions based on their understanding of you, the situation, and the information available
- Someone you empower in this role

Document Decisions:

- Declaration of a Desire for a Natural Death (Living Will)
- Health Care Power of Attorney
- Advance Instruction for Mental Health Treatment
- Understand DNR and MOST

Benefits of the Process:

- Improves the quality of end-of-life care
- Ensures that your decisions will be guided by your own values and goals
- Provides a road-map for your loved ones to help you in times of crisis or decision
- Strengthens relationships with the people who matter most



Talking with Family and Friends about Health Care Wishes:

Tips and Strategies for Having Conversations

Conversation Triggers may include:

- The illness or death of a friend or colleague
- Death of a noted person
- Newspaper articles, movies, TV shows, magazines, books
- Sermons
- Annual medical check ups
- Family occasions and gatherings
- Financial or legal planning
- Health crisis

Strategies to Consider in Talking with Family Members:

- Start with yourself
- Use a relaxed approach that doesn't threaten independence
- Don't change your normal communication style
- Anticipate possible reactions and how you might respond
- Have conversations with both individuals and groups
- Think about who is important for you in these discussions
- Err on the side of talking with more people rather than fewer people
- Consider direct and indirect ways of communicating: see what works
- Pay special attention to conversations with your health care advocate and alternate
- Pay special attention to conversations with the significant person(s) you think are most likely to disagree with you

Long Distance Communication Tips:

- Plan ahead for initiating and revisiting conversations
- Understand the issues and dynamics as much as possible going in
- Familiarize yourself with local resources and services
- Access support in your local area and from regional/national organizations
- Consider the time and setting of conversations
- Consider how best to interact with family members who are close by
- Take care to recognize your own needs and limitations
- Remember that this is a process that occurs over time