



Advance care planning

How to talk with loved ones

Advance care planning means preparing for future decisions about your medical care if you become seriously ill or unable to communicate your wishes. Having meaningful conversations with your loved ones is part of this planning process. Here are some tips for discussing this topic sensitively and effectively.

- Before initiating the conversation, take time to reflect. Think about your values, preferences, and what you hope to communicate.
- Familiarize yourself with key concepts like advance directives, living wills, healthcare proxies, and palliative care options.
- Choose a comfortable, private setting where everyone can speak freely without interruptions. Ensure that you have ample time.
- Ease into the discussion by sharing your thoughts or experiences. For example, “I’ve been thinking about how I’d like to be cared for if something were to happen to me...”
- Discuss specific preferences, such as life-sustaining treatments, pain management, hospice care, and where you would prefer to spend your final days.
- Use open-ended questions to encourage dialogue. Listen without interrupting, and acknowledge emotions.
- Document your wishes with written records, such as advance directives or living wills, and store them securely. Share copies with close family members as well as your healthcare proxy and/or medical providers.
- After the initial conversation, check in with your loved ones to see if they have any new thoughts or questions. Revisit the topic periodically to review and update plans.



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